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ABSTRACT

The six issues of this newsletter for academic year 1992/93 typically include one or more lead articles; the columns "Research Watch," "ERIC Tracks," and "Teaching Assistant (TA) Forum"; Case Studies; and Case Study Responses. Major articles and columns included in this volume are: "Cooperative Learning as a Teaching Alternative"; "The Practical Intelligence of Improving Teaching"; "Diversity and the Classics" (Robert Crossley); "Making Tests Teach"; "Assessment Planning: Measuring the Improvement in Teaching" (Robert M. Jones and John E. Steinbrink); "TV or Not TV"; "Students as Reviewers of Faculty Case Studies" (John Furlong); "Teaching Assistants: The Issues, the Programs, and the Resources" (Judi Conrad); "The Thinking Heart"; "Ten Fundamental Truths About Learning" (William A. Reinsmith); "Teaching for Character"; "Five Ways to Improve Written Responses to Student Work" (Robert S. Dornsife); "Political Correctness and the 'Feminization' of Academe" (Bonnie Wheeler); "Rules, Fairness, Grades, and Graduation"; and "Active Learning" (Judi Conrad). Many of the articles include references. (GLR)

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VOLUME 2, 1992-93.

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THE NATIONAL TEACHING & LEARNING

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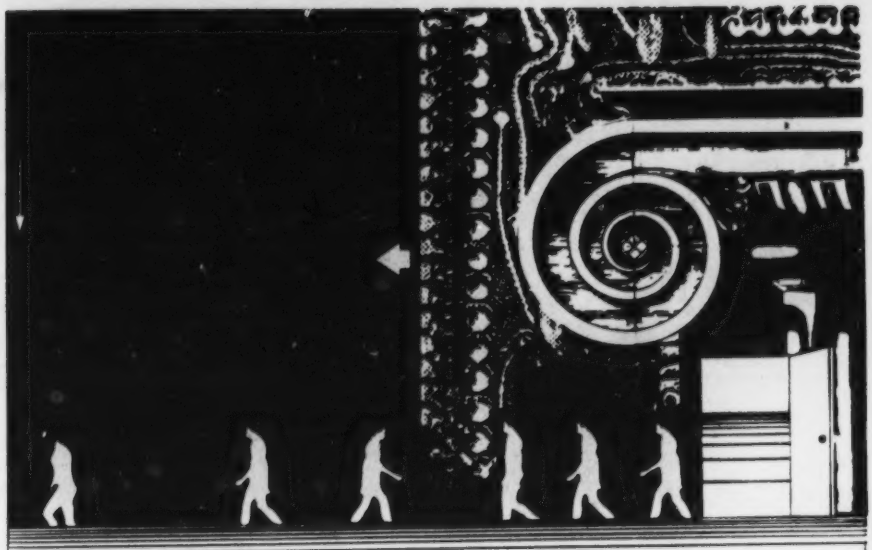
Volume 2 Number 1 1992



Conference Report

Cooperative Learning As A Teaching Alternative

The first three days in October, ISETA (the International Society for Exploring Teaching Alternatives) and the Network for Cooperative Learning in Higher Education held a combined conference in San Pedro. It was the 22nd annual conference for ISETA, but the first for the cooperative learning network. While ISETA members delivered hundreds of papers on innovations and alternatives they'd explored in their classrooms, interest in cooperative learning as a general approach tended to overshadow some of this activity, at the same time providing a larger conceptual framework for much of it. Everyone shared an interest in what this approach to teaching offered, though they might not have been interested in computer-aided instruction, curriculum design, multimedia technologies or other more narrow topics.

Perhaps the biggest irony of the conference was the aura of newness surrounding cooperative learning. As speaker after speaker pointed out, cooperative learning ideas and methods have been around and in use for decades. But only now do they seem poised to make a wide-spread impact on higher education. Two plenary speakers — David Johnson of the University of Minnesota and Alexander Astin of the University of California at Los Angeles — laid out compelling pictures of cooperative learning as perhaps the most systematic approach to active learning and of how and why it seems to work.

Why has it taken so long for this approach to begin having significant influence? Alexander Astin answered the question with a mystery: "Higher education is the last to pick up ideas about pedagogy," he said. "I think the best teaching around probably goes on in primary schools, but you guys know that," he continued.

The Power of Peers

Previewing the findings of *What Matters in College*, his forthcoming book on his national study of student outcomes, Astin described how his findings support a cooperative learning approach to teaching. Briefly, the study followed 25,000 students drawn from 200 colleges through four years of college. Through various means it looked at entering characteristics of the students, their enviromental experiences inside and outside of college, and, finally, at their cognitive and attitudinal differences (or outcomes) after four years. The study wanted to know which, if any, curriculum and instruction issues influenced these outcomes.

What Astin found was that how students approach their instruction

and how faculty deliver it matter far more than formal curricular structure. Further, he found, as many have suggested, that one of the crucial factors is the degree to which students are actively engaged or involved in their educational experience.

Out of all this, Astin said, the peer group emerges as the greatest single effect on educational success. "In many respects," Astin said, "cooperative learning is merely a means of capitalizing on the power of the peer group."

"Cooperative learning works because [in it] students are held accountable by their peers and students are responsible to their peers," he said. These, he speculated, are the reasons students become more motivated in response to this kind of instruction than they do to what he describes as "traditional competitive approaches."

But lest anyone become too focused on small group, Astin went on to say: "I don't think all of it [learning] is happening in the groups. I think a lot of it happens outside. The group is the catalyst."

The Paradigm Shift

The irony in the sense of the new surrounding cooperative learning deepened when David Johnson pointed out in his speech that during the last 90 years over 575 experimental studies comparing the effectiveness of cooperative, competitive and individual approaches to learning have been published, as well as over 100 correlational studies. More, he said, is known about the efficacy of cooperative learning than about lecturing or almost any other aspect of education. Moreover, far from being a K-12 phenomenon, Johnson reported that up until the 1970s most studies focused on the college level.

Why has it taken so long for this approach to begin having significant influence? Like Astin, Johnson really had no answer. But he responded not with a mystery, but with an analogy to the history of the Spanish Armada.

Like most of the presenters on cooperative learning, Johnson used small group process techniques to draw everyone into an investment in the answer. In this case, he broke the 200 plus assembled into pairs and nudged them through an inquiry that quickly brought forward all the myths about that famous naval battle. In the end, it turns out, the British defeated Spain not because they had more ships or cannons, but because they broke the rules and customs of naval warfare. Traditionally, naval battles were won by managing to come alongside the enemy's ship, board her, defeat her crew in hand-to-hand combat, and then sink her. The British changed all that, deciding to sink the larger Spanish ships from a distance with their smaller, more mobile cannons. In short, the British created a paradigm shift in the history of naval warfare.

Change, simply and unaccountably, takes time, Johnson explained. And he illustrated the point with another (less glorious) lesson from British naval history: how it took over 200 years for a proven cure for rickets to be accepted and implemented. The paradigm of teaching is in the process of shifting, Johnson believes, and he offered the following diagram comparing the old and the new.

Paradigms of Teaching

	Old	New
Knowledge	Transferred from Faculty to Students	Jointly Constructed by Students and Faculty
Students	Passive Vessel to be filled by Faculty's Knowledge	Active Constructor, Discoverer, Transformer of own Knowledge
Faculty Purpose	Classify and Sort Students	Develop Students' Competencies and Talents
Relationships	Impersonal Relationships among Students and between Faculty and Students	Personal Transaction among Students and between Faculty and Students
Context	Competitive, Individualistic	Cooperative Learning in Classroom and Cooperative Teams among Faculty
Assumption	Any Expert Can Teach	Teaching is Complex and Requires Considerable Training

In the end, said Johnson, the goal of the new paradigm is students who are more like engineers than technicians. Engineers, he concluded, not only know facts and how to use them, they also understand concepts. Thus they can do things they've been taught to do, but also things they haven't. They can both frame problems and solve them, often creating new knowledge in the process. ■

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Elements of Cooperative Learning

How does *cooperative learning* differ from simply asking students to work in groups and expecting them to cooperate? In at least five ways, according to its proponents. Though their approaches differ, practitioners all agree cooperative learning groups depend on these basic elements.

• **Positive Interdependence**. For coop learning to succeed, students must feel that they need each other and cannot truly succeed unless everyone in the group succeeds.

• **Face-to-Face Promotive Interaction**. Students must promote one another's learning by explaining, discussing, sharing what they know. In short they must confront and teach each other.

• **Individual Accountability**. Despite the emphasis on collective action, practitioners have found that without accountability, full participation or truly "active" learning can't be guaranteed. Thus, students must remain individually accountable. For example, any member of a group must be ready to explain the group's answer to a problem.

• **Interpersonal and Small Group Skills**. Learning in and from groups depends on having and using a whole set of social skills, including leadership, decision-making, trust-building, communication, and conflict-management skills. Unfortunately, students often don't have these skills; happily, they can be taught at the same time subject matter is being covered. In a sense, they stand as a constant shadow curriculum within the process itself.

• **Group Processing**. By this practitioners mean a kind of group self-consciousness. "Group processing" involves a stepping back from group activity to look critically at the group's dynamics — for example, by listing at least three actions members took that helped the group succeed, and by listing at least one that could make the group even more successful in the future.

> Learning in and from groups depends on having and using a whole set of social skills. Unfortunately many students don't have them.

Behind each of these elements stands a host of techniques, methods and structures designed to create and maintain the right dynamic. The "right dynamic"? A dynamic focused primarily on the mastery of thinking skills — "the ability to generate, question, combine, categorize, recategorize, evaluate, and apply information," as Spencer Kagan puts it.

Like most of the leaders in this approach to teaching, Kagan has a vivid story of how his interest began. He tells of sitting in a boat in the middle of a lake grading papers when he was a professor at the University of California at Riverside. He thought to himself, 'Why should I be the only one in the class getting to share these ideas?' On the lake, he realized that in traditional instruction, the teacher is the active one. If he has an exchange with a student, two people are active. There had to be a better way.

If a class repeatedly breaks up into pairs or groups of four (as happens in the cooperative learning approach), the amount of simultaneous intellectual activity within the classroom multiplies many times. It also changes character, becoming quickly richer in response to social diversity. Further, the breaking apart every ten minutes or so to consider some aspect of the lesson and then coming back together to see what other groups thought transforms the class itself into a learning group, a group with a coherence and active character seldom awakened through traditional methods of instruction.

What happens to the teacher in all this? In essence the teacher becomes a sort of guide, a facilitator and coach who sets problems and creates the conditions for learning. But in this approach the teacher turns the focus away from his own knowledge and back toward the business of cognition itself. Learning finds its own momentum. Everybody owns it, and everybody's along for the ride. ■

RESOURCES

The five elements probably don't pinpoint the heart of cooperative learning and why it's effective. With cooperative learning, feeling the pulse may offer a more direct route to the heart of what's happening. The pulse of coop learning lies in the structures, techniques and methods through which it's implemented.

Perhaps the strongest advocate of structures as the key to understanding both the theory and practice of cooperative learning is Spencer Kagan. His book describes a huge number of specific structures and a kind of idea-tree approach to using them to design lessons that incorporate the basic elements of coop learning.

• Kagan, Spencer. *Cooperative Learning: Resources for Teachers.* 1990. San Juan Capistrano: Resources For Teachers, Inc. (27128 Paseo Espada, Suite 622, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675. Phone: 1-800-933-2667.)

• Readers still skeptical about the efficacy of a cooperative approach might want to look at David and Roger Johnson's comprehensive review — *Cooperation and Competition: Theory and Research* (1989).

Their 1991 book — *Active Learning: Cooperation in the College Classroom* (co-authored with Karl Smith) — focuses on higher education. It combines a comprehensive look at the types of cooperative learning groups — formal, informal, base groups, and others — with specific lesson structures and an overview of how to use cooperative learning at the college level.

The Johnsons' many publications are available from: Interaction Book Company, 7208 Cornelia Drive, Edina, MN 55435. Phone: (612) 831-9500.

• Some of the most exciting sessions at the San Pedro conference dealt with mathematics. Session leader Neil Davidson of the University of Maryland has published a number of highly-regarded works on applying this approach both in mathematics and beyond: *Enhancing Thinking Through Cooperative Learning* (edited with Toni Worsham) (New York: Teachers College Press, 1992), and *Cooperative Learning in Mathematics: A Handbook for Teachers* (Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Wesley, 1990).

Getting Past The Doorman

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

At times it seemed like an icebreakers' convention: everybody had one. (Sometimes they had the same one.) David Johnson, a leading authority on cooperative learning theory and methods from the University of Minnesota, started out his luncheon presentation with a survey. "Which one of these sentiments describes how you are feeling these days?" he said.

a) "I feel much better now that I've given up hope."
b) "I've given up my search for truth, but I'm still looking for a good fantasy."
c) "I'm not perfect, but parts of me are excellent."

Most picked "c." I picked "b." It occurred to me that maybe that was why I had come to San Pedro, to find — if not the final truth — at least a working fantasy of how teaching might succeed in fostering real learning.

But I'm not an uncritical person and so, while fantasies may come easily, **belief and trust** do not. And in San Pedro, I rediscovered the importance of those two elements.

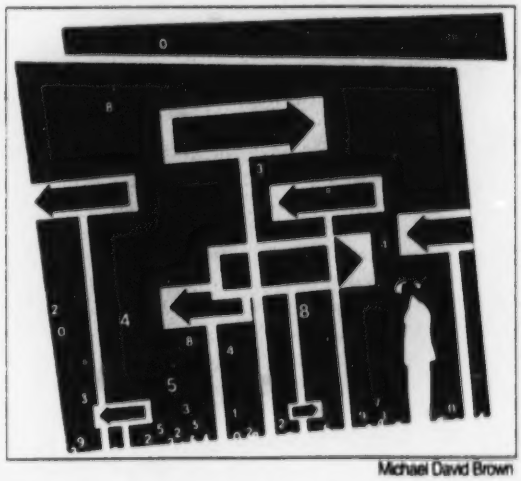
> Fairly or unfairly, style sets the stage for trust, and I didn't really trust this style.

Frankly though, I thought about belief and trust only on reflection. It was **style** that nettled me in the moment and in that nettling I discovered, yet again, how important style is in winning or losing acceptance, opening or closing doors. What would my old teachers — at a state university in Kentucky, at the College of William and Mary in Virginia, and the University of Wisconsin at Madison — have thought of the style here? What would they have thought of an hour's presentation made up entirely of overheads drawn from newspaper cartoons, cartoons with punch-lines like "I said I *taught* him; I didn't say he *learned* anything," or of a session in which the attendees took parts and read a play the presenter had written about a campus climate cold to teaching?

What would their attitude have been toward the idea — comfortably accepted here — that teaching methods used and proven in the K-12 world might have a lot to teach them about teaching in college? And what would they have thought of **"the Quiet Signal"**? How would they have reacted just to the names of some of the teaching techniques — **"Numbered Heads Together," "Think-Pair-Share," "Send-A-Problem," "Guess-the-Fib"**? Or even some of the grown-up terms, like **"pre-instructional decisions," and "epistemic curiosity"**?

I think they would have been skeptical. Many would have walked away without listening at all. But some, I think the best, would have been curious, however high their skeptical eyebrows might have been raised by styles so unlike their own.

Use your finger to draw a diagram in the sand and you offer offense in some desert countries; use a stick and you don't. Custom, ritual, style are important to proud, ancient, tribal cultures — including higher education. We suspect others' jargon. We doubt their affinity with us when they don't lecture, ask us to pair and share or "paraphrase what John just said," and direct us to "celebrate our learning." Fairly or unfairly, style sets the stage for trust and belief. And I didn't really trust this style.



Michael David Brown

Still, trying to emulate the best of my old teachers, I worked at listening through the static it created for me. When I did, the signal was clear; more than that, it was moving, exciting, transforming. I *felt* myself learning, opening, changing. **"Norms of active listening"** were being established; the intellectual work was being spread around and shared. The **"three-step interview"** made a difference and achieved important goals, however rinky-dink it seemed to me at first.

In the end looking at the three days in San Pedro as one big "Think-Pair-Share," the learning for me was this: The threshold of change has a doorman, a doorman more concerned with style than substance, because style is easy to see and substance must be re-cognized. We need to convince that doorman not that we know the owner, but that we *are* the owner. It's safe to let us in. We can hold our own with the young and the hip; we won't offend the old and stodgy because inside we are all of them. When we're talking to the doorman, it's ourselves we're talking to. And we need to assure ourselves that we really do want to get past the inertia of pride and caution, that we want to get more deeply into learning. We want to get to the place where ideas don't just joust and fence and do combat, to the place where they also lock arms and form circles and lines and human chains of possibility. A place where we don't so much compete for the truth, as we create it; a place where our learning does not so much improve us as transform us. We have to find the calm and courage and confidence to convince our doorman that our brains will not turn to jelly and we will not lose our status if we cross his threshold. Perhaps all this is merely another way of talking about what **Parker Palmer** described in these pages (Vol. 1, No. 2, 1991) as finding **"the courage to teach."**

As I see it, it's not our skepticism about new ideas that holds most of us back; it's that doorman. And I guess in my fantasy when we recognize that, he just fades away and we find ourselves on the other side, teaching and learning, transforming our own lives and others and not even thinking about how much hard work it is because now, more than ever, it's our life.

— James Rhem

THE FRESHMAN YEAR EXPERIENCE

Compiled by Judi Conrad, Associate Director, ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education

DISCOVERING WHERE THEY'RE AT

"The Use of Learning and Study Strategies by College Freshmen." Hulick, Chuck; Higginson, Bonnie. November 1989. ED Number: 314971.

How well do students know how to study when they arrive on campus as freshmen? A number of studies indicate, not very well. A recent study of freshmen at Murray State University is representative. At this west Kentucky school 514 students enrolled in a Freshman Orientation class were given a demographic questionnaire and the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI). (The LASSI instrument categorizes responses into ten subscales: attitude, motivation, time management, anxiety, concentration, information processing, selecting main ideas, study aids, self-testing, and test strategies.)

Results indicated that relatively few students (24%) had received any prior training in the use of learning strategies.

Perhaps as a consequence, the students reported using learning and study strategies at a lower, less proficient level than the inventory's norming group. However, even using them at lower levels, students who did employ conscious learning strategies, especially in the areas of motivation, concentration and test taking, demonstrated higher grades at the end of their freshman year. Not surprisingly, students who scored lower on such subscales as attitude, time management, and anxiety found college to be more difficult.

The students surveyed who studied more in high school reported using more of the learning and studying strategies and perceived themselves to be more skillful and knowledgeable in the task of learning. Interestingly enough, there was no significant difference in the use of strategies by students identified with rural as opposed to urban high schools.

ESTABLISHING COLLEGE STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS

"Promoting Active Learning in Freshmen: The Ursinus College Academic Orientation Workshop for Freshmen and Transfer Students. Outcome Evaluation. Results of a Two-Month Follow Up Study." Chambliss, Catherine. 1990. ERIC Document Number: 320468.

In an effort to promote classroom participation as the standard expected of the successful college student, faculty at Ursinus College initiated an Academic Orientation Workshop for freshmen designed to help students experience the concept of active learning and the confidence that comes with assuming greater responsibility for their own learning.

The program enlisted upperclass students, paired them in teams of two with individual faculty members, and put the upperclassmen-faculty teams through a preparatory leadership training workshop conducted by a psychologist/faculty member. These teams then led the orientation workshops.

Scheduled for groups of 50 new students and running an hour and a half, the workshops began with a 10 minute videotape produced and directed by an upperclass student. The tape showed five Ursinus faculty members "in action" and speaking to what they believe are the means by which students can best learn.

Following the tape, the larger group broke up into smaller discussion groups led by the teams of trained faculty and upperclassmen. Discussion centered on what it means to be an active learner; however, each sub-group shaped its own experience

"Training for Thinking Skills in Relation to Two Cognitive Measures." Moore, Julia G.; And Others *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, v20 n2 p59-65 Win 1987. EJ 650060 SP 516531.

A study examining the performance of college freshmen trained in thinking skills and the relationship of this training to scores on an intelligence scale indicates that groups taught divergent thinking skills scored significantly higher in a comprehension subtest than did groups taught convergent thinking skills or the control group.

"Faculty Training: From Group Process to Collaborative Learning." Friday, Robert A. *Journal of the Freshman Year Experience*, v2 n1 p49-67 1990 EJ 415164 HE 527204.

Authoritarian and democratic teaching styles are contrasted by comparing how a college faculty facilitator using each style would approach standard teaching assignments of interaction, policy, task development, feedback, and evaluation. Democratic style is seen as producing greater student satisfaction, collaborative learning as the logical extension of a group process freshman seminar.

touching on a variety of issues including study skills, the learning process, or the college experience in general.

While increases in freshman classroom participation at Ursinus have not been striking, there has been a modest increase in student willingness to comment in class and, interestingly enough, faculty did observe increases in the level of classroom participation among the upperclass student leaders. Two months after the workshop a questionnaire was given to a sample of students who had participated in the workshop and a comparison group who had not. Workshop members reported that they participated more in college than in high school classes and significantly more than the students who did not attend the academic orientation workshops.

RESPECTING AND EXPANDING EXPERIENCES

"Making Conversations about Teaching and Learning in an Introductory Teacher Education Course." Craft Paper 91-2. Bird, Tom. August 1991. ERIC Document Number: ED337454.

Tom Bird teaches a freshman-level course required of all elementary education majors at Michigan State University. The goals of this course are to help students look at their own preconceived ideas about teaching, to provide them with diverse images of teaching, to introduce several ways of thinking and talking about the business of teaching, and to help students decide whether or not the ideas they brought with them about teaching are worth keeping.

Bird organizes his course around three or four videotapes that illustrate different school lessons on several subjects. He shows each tape twice. Students take notes during the first showing and break out into small-group discussion afterwards. The first showing helps students begin to note how they presently think about teaching and how their thinking might differ from that of their fellow students.

After the students have begun to articulate their own ideas about teaching, Bird assigns an essay or research article that relates to the tape and addresses some particular teaching problem. Students study these articles closely with the goal of mastering the conceptual arguments and vocabulary well enough to apply them to discussions about the taped lessons. As the class progresses, students acquire a set of shared cases and shared ways of talking about them.

To complete the work and evaluate the results, Bird asks his students to write a conversation about each taped lesson employing three distinct voices: that of an inexperienced teacher, an experienced student, and, finally, the voice of the author of the reading.

The impetus for structuring the course this way came from Bird's realization that freshman teacher education majors come to college imbued with a "subjective warrant to teach." Bird characterizes his approach to the subjective warrant, saying: "By engaging students in conversations where they must show understanding in my terms but are free to preserve understanding in their terms, I hope to introduce some images, ideas, and vocabulary into the students' thinking...without forcing a contest that I and the authors of the course readings—and the students—are likely to lose."

By helping students shift their confidence from what they already know to their ability to participate in educational conversation, Bird provides students opportunities to change their minds while preserving their original warrant to teach.

GETTING A HEADSTART

Freshman General Studies Thematic. 1973- . ERIC Document Number: ED316087.

One of a group of reports identified via the American Association of State Colleges and Universities and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education Model Programs Inventory Project (HE 023 199- 261), this document describes the Freshman General Thematic Program (GST) at California State University, Chico. The Chico GST program was established in 1973 to serve two purposes: (1) create a general education program for freshman students that would provide the

basis for a sound liberal arts education; and (2) provide selected faculty with the opportunity to explore innovative teaching methods.

The idea was ambitious. It sought to provide a team-taught general studies program that would be interdisciplinary but thematically integrated, a program that would create a community of students and teachers working together on a multifaceted body of material. It would be a selective program featuring shared field trips and other hands-on experiences.

The program floundered for a number of years mainly because each of the seven professors involved competed for the limited classroom hours and attempted to shove into the new structure course material developed for traditional structures.

After a few years of experimentation, it could be said that the GST curriculum was no worse than the standard general education curriculum; however, it clearly lacked coherence and suffered from curriculum planning bouts that often resembled dog fights over classroom time. It was not until a professor from the Education Department was appointed GST Coordinator that the program began to approximate the original vision of a coherent but many-sided whole.

Michael David Brown

Having worked many years with student teachers on curriculum development, the Coordinator managed to help the GST faculty rethink their own disciplines in terms of their relation to the other disciplines so that they could actually team teach in a truly interdisciplinary fashion. After a full year of planning, the faculty produced a chronologically ordered, "incredibly rich," thirty-three unit, year-long course in Western Civilization thematically organized around Jacob Bronowski's *Ascent of Man.*

Among the many lessons learned through the evolution of this program are the following:

(1) the effort required to rethink one's discipline for an interdisciplinary team approach requires an undaunted belief in and commitment to the thematic general education program;

(2) faculty best suited for this kind of program are those who themselves demonstrate broad interests and knowledge;

(3) the freshman students who are lucky enough to be selected for this program benefit from a bonding relationship with both the faculty and the other students in the program, giving them a kind of social confidence as evidenced by a higher retention rate than other Chico freshmen and the positive comments they make about the program and which other faculty make about them;

(4) it takes even the most cooperative faculty member a full year to begin to be able to work constructively and productively in such a program;

(5) successful integration of many disciplines requires a great deal of coordination and probably a faculty member who can fulfill the coordinator role; and finally

(6) the GST program could probably be implemented anywhere given the requisite faculty members and coordinator committed to the underlying principles of an interdisciplinary approach to a theme, team teaching, and selective student recruitment. (Chico's GST syllabus along with student materials and other course components are included in this ERIC document.)

CONCLUSIONS

The variety of documents in the ERIC database suggests a number of fundamental strategies for building a successful freshman year.

The simplest strategy involves determining the students' level of sophistication (both attitudinal and intellectual) and their level of cognitive skill development. A self-administered assessment instrument such as the one used in the Murray State survey appears to provide a reasonable way to go about making these determinations.

Assuming the degree to which students take responsibility for their own learning is related, at least in part, to the expectations of the college (both faculty and other students), the use of successful upperclassmen as models to help communicate those expectations may, in time, prove an effective means of altering campus climates.

In addition, approaches like those taken by Tom Bird suggest the envelopment of students' initial attitudes and dispositions toward cognition within a wider range of attitudes and dispositions creates affective and intellectual bonds both to the campus and the subject matter. A wide range of research shows that learning communities established early on in a student's career tend to increase retention and enhance learning throughout a college career. Thus Bird's method of respecting students' preconceived ideas while encouraging them to "try out" or "try on" others is a simple strategy that appears to yield sophisticated results.

Finally, experience with integrated general studies programs such as Chico State's further reenforces the educational importance of community in the broadest sense. Given the opportunity to move together through their first year, freshmen derive confidence from the experience, particularly when the faculty are committed to an integrated approach and enjoy functioning interdependently. Further, while the value of competition has been increasingly questioned in recent years, the Chico State program suggests there is much to be said about the learning potential of the student who competes to become part of such an intense and selective program. ■

CASE STUDIES

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Phil Aikman

Phil Aikman bounded into his 8:30 A.M. Introductory Physics class. A tall man with an athletic build, Phil possessed great energy, much of which he devoted to this often-difficult subject matter. He was five minutes late, so he wasted little time taking attendance and dealing with administrative details. This was the fifth week of summer classes, and a lot of material had to be covered in a six-week period. The class met three times a week, two hours each time. A bi-weekly three-hour lab session was also required. The course was a lab science required for majors which non-majors could elect to fulfill their lab science graduation requirement.

"Good morning," Phil said, dropping his text and notes on the desk at the front of the room. "Where is everybody?"

There were only twelve students of the twenty enrolled present in the large windowless classroom typical of Metropolitan University's urban campus.

"Well, it's Monday morning. I guess they'll be along," Phil concluded. "Now, last time we covered some of the conditions of equilibrium. If you'll turn to page 104 in your texts, we'll go over the problems I asked you to do over the weekend."

As the class of nine men and three women arranged their notebooks and prepared for the lesson, Phil wrote several equations on the board. A moment later, a young man and woman hurriedly entered the room and found seats. The woman still held her keys in her hand and the pink rabbit's foot dangling from the chain caught Phil's attention.

"I don't know if you should bring those keys in here," Phil said dryly. "They may offend Miss Taggart."

There were a few smirking laughs as Phil continued to write on the board. No one looked at Wendy Taggart, who sat in the row farthest from the door.

"Now," Phil went on, "please look at Problem 3. Mr. Miles, would you read it aloud for us?"

A large student in a green army jacket seated directly in front of Phil's desk raised his book and read, "Juan and Betina are carrying a 60-kilogram weight on a 4-meter board as shown in Figure 9-20. The mass of the board is 10 kilograms. Since Juan spends most of his time reading cookbooks, whereas Betina regularly does push-ups, they place the weight 2.5 meters from Juan and 1.5 meters from Betina. Find the force in newtons exerted by each to carry the weight."

"Isn't it nice, first of all," Phil said, smiling, "that Juan likes cookbooks and Betina does so many push-ups? It's really terrific how realistic these politically correct textbooks have become."

"They're also Hispanic," added John Miles from his seat at the front of the classroom.

"Who could miss it?" Phil remarked. "I guess Juan's cookbooks are bilingual . . . or maybe bilinguine."

There was a burst of laughter as Phil turned to the blackboard and began sketching the problem. Smiling, Phil started the lesson. As he talked, he turned to the class, peppering them with questions, examples, and comments. When he was not at the board, Phil never stayed still. He walked back and forth, often darting up the aisles or striding nearly to the back of the room. Students had to turn to see him, and the lethargy of the early morning session was soon lost by the dynamic style of his presentation and his sheer physical exuberance.

At 10:30, when the class ended, Wendy Taggart approached Phil.

"I don't know why you had to embarass me like that, Professor Aikman," she said.

"I'm sorry if you were offended, Wendy," Phil answered, "but every time I see an animal skin or rabbit's foot I think of you and your extreme position on animal rights."

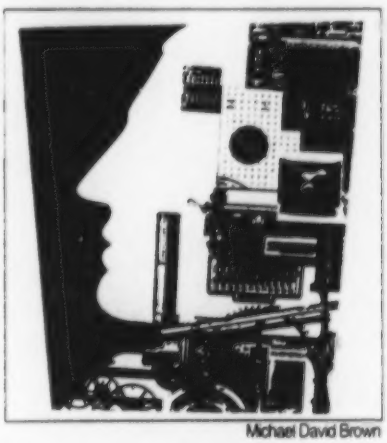
"I have a right to my opinion," Wendy said stubbornly.

"Yes, you do," Phil continued, "but you also have to accept the fact that your opinions, once they're openly expressed, are in a sense public, and can be supported or criticized like any other opinion."

"I just don't see why you have to make animal jokes or make fun of women in the textbook," Wendy said.

"Look, Wendy, I don't want to explain all of this to you again," Phil argued, impatience creeping into his voice. "I teach a very difficult subject at an early hour. I make controversial remarks or use ridiculous examples in order to make the class more interesting. And I do think the students in this class are learning a lot of physics. Now, I have to go. Excuse me."

When Phil first met Wendy, a junior visiting student from a neighboring, but good deal more prestigious school, he was impressed with her



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desire to attend college over the summer, not only to earn credit but to learn something. He also anticipated that she would be one of his best students. Sadly, that was not how things had turned out. Early in the course Wendy had problems with the subject matter, and, despite extra help from Phil, Wendy fell behind. As she did, she became more critical of Phil's teaching style. By this time, the last week before finals, Wendy's grade was clearly in the "C" range. Phil was disappointed: Wendy had not turned out to be one of the bright, challenging students who made the routine fresh.

Two days later the subject was friction, and Phil had assigned some reading and several problems. As the students opened their texts to the pertinent pages, Phil walked back and forth energetically and began:

"Listen, I want you to imagine the circus has come to town and you are

sitting ringside. Right in the middle of the show, Bertha the elephant keels over and dies. Coronary arrest. Boom. Down she goes. So there you are, looking at three thousand pounds of dead pachyderm with no trucks or bulldozers available. Remember, the show must go on! Against the wall you spot several block-and-tackle assemblies and all the coils of rope you could need. The question is, 'What do you have to construct and how much force is needed to drag old Bertha's carcass out of the ring?' "

Many of the students in the room laughed out loud. Several just smiled and looked at one another. In his singular fashion, Phil again had their undivided attention. Only Wendy Taggart seemed disapproving. She said nothing, but looked down at her notebook, not meeting Phil's quick glance. For the rest of the classtime, Phil ignored her.

On Wednesday morning, the last class before review and the final, Phil perceived a change in Wendy's behavior. She seemed to question every tenet, every principle; the simplest procedures for solving equations were challenged. It was clear to other students as well that something was going on. Phil noticed they shared questioning glances. At one point, Wendy interrupted another student who was asking an important question about vector analysis, saying "Could you explain that using a dead animal, Professor Aikman?"

"I'll try to explain it once I hear the question, Miss Taggart," Phil said firmly.

"I mean," Wendy went on, "perhaps we can determine the spring energy in a trap used to catch foxes for fur coats."

Phil decided not to ignore her. "If the question had anything to do with spring energy, Miss Taggart, an animal trap would be an appropriate illustration," Phil said, hoping a subtle reminder of Wendy's inadequacy in physics would quiet her at last, "but since you're so interested in this problem, why don't you tackle Mr. Billing's question?"

Roger Billings, an "A" student, turned in his seat and repeated the question for Wendy, who kept her eyes on Phil Aikman.

"I don't know the answer," she said icily.

"Then allow those of us who do to do our jobs," Phil replied, turning again to Billings.

"Maybe I would understand it if you used dead elephants," Wendy argued.

For some reason, Phil thought of Dan Ackroyd's caustic retort to Jane Curtin in the *faux* newscast on the old *Saturday Night Live* TV show. He turned to Wendy and, in mock indignation, said, "Wendy, you ignorant slut!"

For a moment, there was silence. Then Phil turned to Roger Billings, who laughed uncomfortably, as did a number of other students. Phil saw Wendy Taggart rise from her seat, tears filling her eyes, and run from the room. When she was out of the room, Phil addressed the entire class. "I'm sorry about Miss Taggart," he said, "but she never could take a joke."

Nothing more passed between Phil and Wendy Taggart. The review classes went smoothly and the final was uneventful. Wendy did not do well on the exam, and Phil gave her a "C+" for the course.

Two weeks later, he found a note asking if he would drop by the dean's office on his way out. When Phil reached the dean's office, he was ushered inside. The dean was cordial, but got right to the point.

"Phil, I've got a letter here from a young woman in your summer Physics I section," he began.

"Wendy Taggart," Phil said quickly.

Dean Matheson looked up sharply, his eyes reading Phil's face.

"She makes some pretty serious charges, Phil," he continued. "Among other things, she says you called her an ignorant slut."

"Now wait a minute," Phil broke in. "I was using a bit from *Saturday Night Live*. I think all my students understood that."

"Wait, Phil, let me tell you the whole story," the Dean said. "There's more to this. I also got a call this morning from the dean of students at Wendy's college. She was very upset and was telling me — out of professional courtesy, I guess — that she was thinking of writing a formal letter of complaint to the Provost."

"Before all this letter-writing gets out of hand," Phil argued, the anger in his voice forcing the words out in short measured tones, "I think it would be a good idea if someone went to the trouble to get the facts."

"Calm yourself, Phil," the dean said reassuringly, "that's why you're here. I got her call this morning and sent you a note right away. Now, let me tell you what I want you to do. Give me a written account of this whole business. I'll prepare a response and we'll go from there."

"Go where?" Phil asked himself, but he decided for the moment to say nothing further. As he rose and headed for the door, he wondered if he or Wendy would have the last laugh. ■

CASE STUDY RESPONSES

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Academic life would be much simpler if its evils were caused by villainous individuals who delighted in inflicting pain. But in the Phil Aikman case, a student experiences humiliation and attains less success than her abilities warrant due to a faculty member's failure to recognize the reality of his power or to use it responsibly.

In the physics class described above, the teacher considers himself free to introduce jokes about animal rights, race and ethnicity, and gender, but he is not prepared to entertain any response to his jokes except laughter or good-humored acquiescence. Wendy, the student object of his jokes, insists on laying claim to her own feelings rather than those that Aikman wants her to have, by explaining that she was embarrassed rather than amused. Aikman responds with the argument that the issue between them is really a question of freedom of speech. If Wendy wants to express her opinions, he says, then she must recognize Aikman's right to attack them in the classroom. In Aikman's argument, the physics class, which is

not only his turf, but the arena in which he decides her academic fate, has somehow become transmuted into a sort of ideal marketplace of ideas where faculty members and students freely comment on each other's opinions.

Disregarding Wendy's appeal that he stop embarrassing her, Aikman proceeds to introduce a classroom example to which he knows that she is sensitive. His insistence that she has no right to be angry and his refusal to impose any restraint upon his own impulse to use any example that occurs to him finally drives Wendy to breach the bounds of classroom decorum. Taking the offensive, she attempts to ridicule Aikman by repeatedly introducing the animal rights issue into all of the questions and problems being discussed in class. Anger and frustration have led Wendy to create an embarrassing

Aikman, while considering his own provocative references to Wendy's opinions completely appropriate, rejects the notion that she may have a right to respond in kind.

situation for herself, for other students and for Aikman.

Aikman, while considering his own provocative references to Wendy's opinions completely appropriate, rejects the notion that she may have a right to respond in kind. Stung by Wendy's awkward effort to ridicule him, Aikman resorts to slurs on her inadequacy in physics. When Wendy still refuses to be silenced, he mockingly says, "you ignorant slut." Wendy is reduced to tears. Although she has not yet learned how to take a joke, she has at last been effectively silenced. The review classes again run smoothly.

What stands out in this case is the problem that arises out of a failure to take seriously the unequal power relationship that inevitably exists between faculty member and student. When Aikman wants to joke about Wendy's opinion or about Hispanics, he feels free to do so and lays claim to a sort of First Amendment right to joke about her opinions in the classroom. But he doesn't recognize her right to criticize him and ignores her desire to be free from public embarrassment, as well as the requirements of simple courtesy, which suggest the avoidance of jokes that are painful to the human being who is their object. The limits imposed upon Wendy by her status as a student and the power granted Aikman by his status as a faculty member exist, whether or not they are explicitly recognized. Honesty and sensitivity about power relationships are an important part of good teaching (and courtesy is seldom out of place.)

John Furlong
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Transylvania University

As teachers and professors, we are public people. We should pay at least as much attention to what we say and how we say it as should a responsible mayor, governor, or president — and do so motivated by civility and fairness. Neither tenure, nor academic freedom, nor intellectual accomplishment warrants our speaking and acting as we would in a bar, a party, or a sporting event. Jokes, examples, and asides in class — all of these need to be used with care, not because we fear being politically incorrect, but because it is our job to teach and that job overlaps and interlocks with being fair and civil. (Any challenge to this principle on the grounds of academic freedom misses both the ethical and pedagogical import of the point I'm making by a country mile. Offering a nonstandard opinion for discussion in class, or employing innovative pedagogy, do not excuse or make OK using one's position of power to belittle another's beliefs or status.)

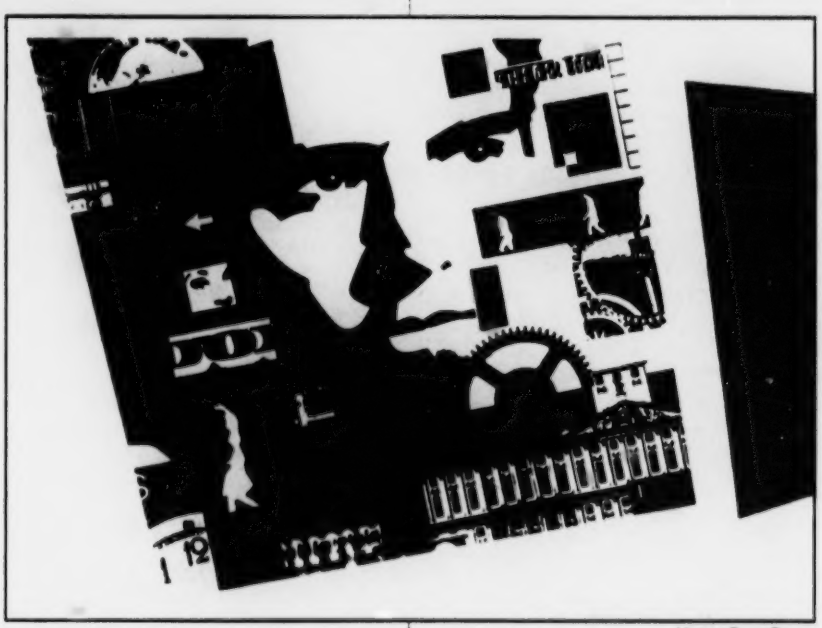
With civility and fairness in mind, then, let us reflect on Phil Aikman. "I was using a bit from Saturday Night Live," says the aggrieved prof. "I think all my students understood that." Precisely. They recalled skits which were humorous because the dueling journalists being parodied couldn't get by with using such language to each other in a real-life newscast. So how does this take Aikman off the hook? He has invited his class to think of him as having

Why is the young woman's rabbit foot pink? Why are the only two other students mentioned by name male?

special permission to express his real feelings through the veil of comic absurdity, to think of him as news broadcaster Ackroyd making a humiliating sexist putdown of his cohost, a putdown no real newsman could make and expect to keep his job. And Aikman is asking the class to imagine this while they all inhabit a venue designed for serious public debate. By Aikman's own account, in other words, he is guilty of a gross abuse of professional ethics and should be punished.

Since all of this seems so clear, I find it hard to believe that the respondents to this case study are meant to comment on whether or not Aikman is at fault in his conduct with Wendy, for I can imagine no question here. Nor can I imagine any pedagogical ore to be mined from a glaring abuse of professorial privilege. What may be unfair to Phil are the stereotypes written into the case itself. Phil is described as a Physics prof who has to cover a lot of routine material and tries to awaken flagging interest by making jokes early in the morning. He's given a crude sense of humor ("bilinguine"?), he plays to similarly-endowed wits like John Miles in the front row, and he seems to be clearly ignorant of his own language.

Wendy, too, is stereotyped, but less so. Would the case have become more interesting from the standpoint of professional conduct or pedagogy if Aikman had been depicted as an otherwise sensitive, intelligent and urbane professor of philosophy, who, unaccountably, makes fun of the



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animal rights stance of a female premed student? I don't want to cavil about the way the authors cast the study, for I may have invoked entirely the wrong thing to comment on. (Yet, why is the young woman's rabbit foot pink? Why are the only two other students mentioned by name male? Perhaps the authors intended to insert these elements to heighten the oppressive atmosphere in the class for Wendy and to indicate to us that Aikman's sexism is pervasive, even normative.)

So that I don't completely ignore pedagogy, let me comment very briefly on Aikman's retort to Wendy "that [her] opinions, once they're openly expressed, are in a sense public, and can be supported or criticized like any other opinion." Once again, Aikman's naivety is breathtaking and self-indicting. No matter how Wendy's position came up, it certainly has nothing to do with acceleration or spring velocity. Even so, an opinion expressed by a student has less public weight than an opinion expressed by a teacher, and Aikman's ongoing challenge to Wendy embeds an opinion of his, which, though unexpressed, is entirely public. Finally, we have no evidence that Wendy's original expression of her opinion was meant to twit Aikman; Aikman, however, seems to have made her opinions the butt of his jejune, early-morning yuks. ■

VIEWPOINT

Dusting Off Our Personal Teaching Philosophies

Richard Arlin Stull, Ed.D.
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It has been ten years since I first wrote a statement of teaching philosophy in graduate school. When I reviewed it recently, I was surprised to find that what was theoretical then truly has meaning for me now. Oddly (for me), I still believe the same things I did ten years ago, but now I have more basis for believing them. Given budget cutback worries, committee responsibilities, student advising, the pressure to publish, and the seemingly endless minutia of day-to-day life, it might be time for all of us to pause for a moment and reacquaint ourselves with those philosophies we formed at the beginning of our careers. When we do, we find ourselves looking up from the immediate pressures of tasks and seeing ourselves again in our primary roles as teachers and learners. Undergirding the most specialized of disciplines lies the individual teacher's approach to the process of education in general. When I looked back (or up) at what I believe, here's what I found.

Natural Law and Human Persuasion

I believe all educators should be students of natural law and of human persuasion. The logic of the scientific method and the illogic of the human psyche and heart must both be understood and applied in the business of teaching. Given this, I believe, as a teacher, I have three seminal responsibilities to my students.

- The first is to communicate the organized knowledge of my discipline in a clear and understandable way. But presenting the information is not enough. The presentation must reflect the teacher's engagement with the knowledge and invite the students' engagement with it. Engagement is the threshold of understanding, one of the distinguishing features of the truly professional teacher.
- The second is to be well-versed in the teaching of specific skills that are inherent in my discipline. Movement skills are the special province of the physical educator. Here the organized body of knowledge from the natural and social sciences engages the phenomenon of human movement potential. The applied setting can be as diverse as teaching preteens how to hit a softball, the rehabilitation of an injured knee, teaching how certain physical activities correlate with health and longevity, or simply imparting the appreciation and joy found in doing physical activity for its own sake.
- Finally, my third main responsibility is to serve as a facilitator for insight and self discovery. Ultimately, we must lead students to insight, to their own integration of organized knowledge and applied skills. Helping students learn to make sense of experience and solve problems is perhaps the greatest and most important role for an educator. I believe that personal insight, like luck, is rarely accidental. Branch Rickey, the sports owner responsible for baseball player Jackie Robinson's breaking the

color barrier in professional sports said, "Luck is the residue of design." The great educator teaches organized knowledge and skills, but more importantly facilitates insight and discovery through his or her unique connection with the body of organized knowledge and skills.

Specific Responsibilities to My Students

Inherent in these roles are certain responsibilities to my students. First, to ***prepare a well-planned course*** of study with specific objectives and expectations for performance. The unambiguous setting of realistic yet high expectations is, in my view, the best prescription for student success. Second, I try to recognize and ***appreciate the individual differences*** in learning styles and personality traits. I try to enhance those traits that are unique and positive in the individual. And third, I attempt to serve as an agent of the personal as well as academic maturation of my students. One's effects on a student academically may only be a small part of one's contribution to the total person. Emerson said, "What we are really looking for is someone who is capable of helping us become the person we are capable of becoming."

I take great joy in bringing humor and enthusiasm to my students. Enthusiasm comes from the Greek, *en theo*, meaning "the God within." Humor, for me, is a personal instant vacation, an antidote to the complexities of life. "In tragedy," said British playwright Christopher Fry, "every moment is eternity; in comedy, eternity is a moment."

Responsibilities Students Have To Me

I believe there are three critical responsibilities that students have to me in particular, and their fellow classmates as well. I cannot insist upon these, but I can let my students know that the teaching/learning process is interactive and dynamic. The first is to ***maintain an open mind.*** This is the foundation of learning and understanding. I can model this attitude in my behavior in the classroom; indeed, I must if I hope to expect it from my students.

Emerson said, "What we are really looking for is someone who is capable of helping us become the person we are capable of becoming."

Secondly, students need to recognize that they must work hard to ***master fundamentals***, including definition and nomenclature. This is the most laborious and difficult task for students in my experience. The impatience for "applied" and "practical" knowledge before one masters basic elements is understandable — yet we do not do ourselves or our students favors by not insisting upon a firm foundation. A sensitive and skilled musician can genuinely interpret a piece of music only if scales were practiced endlessly first.

And finally, I expect students to ***participate actively*** in the learning process. This contributes to the growth of the individual student, his or her peers, and to my own personal and professional growth.

In seeking to become better college teachers, we find ourselves torn in two directions. On the one hand, we, as faculty in particular disciplines, spend much of our time attempting to define our differences from other disciplines and in the pursuit of specialized knowledge. On the other hand, we feel an interest in getting on top of the literature concerning teaching tactics and methodologies; processes by which we hope to become more effective teachers. Torn as we are, we often forget that our strategic approach to teaching, our personal beliefs and values, are finally — and more than anything else — what defines us as teachers and learners. ■

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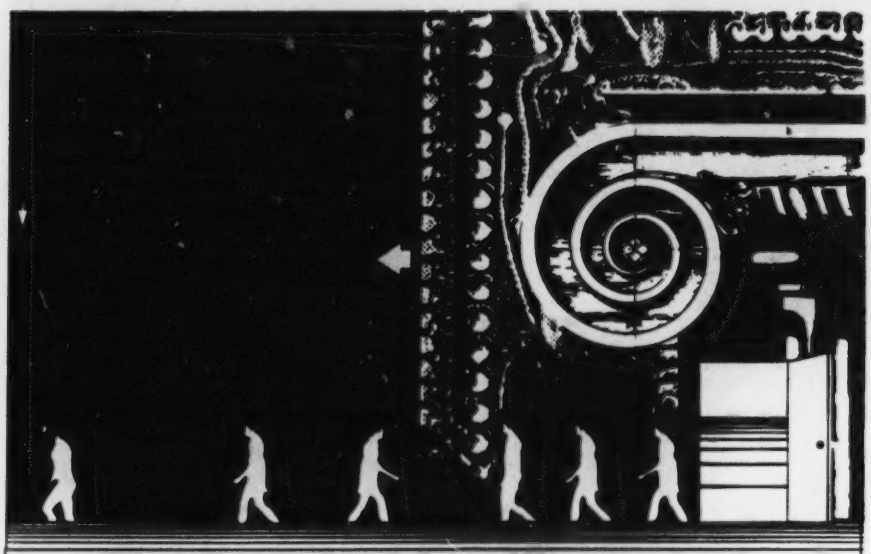

The Practical Intelligence of Improving Teaching

Improving teaching and learning may not be as difficult as many suppose, according to Robert Sternberg, professor of psychology at Yale University. "I think it's mostly a matter of wanting to," says Sternberg. "I give a lot of talks to different groups, college groups, secondary groups, and I find a hard core of people who just don't want to change, but there's also a substantial number that are willing to listen and who want to improve themselves."

A prolific scholar in the field of cognitive psychology, Sternberg has become a popular speaker in part because of the practical grounding of his work on intelligence. His book *The Triarchic Mind: A New Theory of Human Intelligence* (1988), for example, describes some mental processes as "blue collar," and others as "white collar" and is filled with anecdotal insights (often autobiographical) into how the theory works in practice. More recently he has been concentrating on applications of his theory to teaching and to an investigation of what he calls "tacit knowledge" or common sense.

Different Ways of Thinking

The quickest introduction to Sternberg's theory of intelligence lies in his description of the predominate thinking styles: legislative, executive and judicial. In general terms Sternberg sees intelligence as a "mental self-management"— hence the analogy to government. **Legislative** thinkers like to make their own rules. **Executive** thinkers want to get things done and follow procedures. **Judicial** thinkers like to compare and evaluate. These general labels, which Sternberg elaborates in interesting ways, reflect three powerful and interactive components of intelligence — its creative, analytical, and practical sides.

Which leads to Sternberg's central advice on improving college teaching: "I think the most important thing is for teaching to be varied — be analytical, creative, and practical — because then you're benefitting different kids. Most all the teaching that's done really benefits high-memory kids, who are willing to sit down and memorize the book."

In a number of detailed studies, Sternberg and colleagues have found that faculty tend to overestimate the extent to which students share their own style. "So you tend to teach to people who are like yourself," says Sternberg, "but in fact a lot of kids aren't like yourself." Furthermore, faculty tend to give higher evaluations and grades to students who match their own cognitive styles.The important implication of these findings, says Sternberg, lies in the challenge to "teach and assess in a way that fits different kids' kinds of styles."

"Multiple choice tests tend to benefit kids with an **executive** style, for example. **Legislative** kids like the creative, like to be given a lot of freedom. **Judicial** kids like to do evaluative stuff. **Global** kids like to look at the big picture. **Local** kids like the details."

But on a practical level, can faculty transcend their own predispositions and reach a broader range of students, especially if they have "set" teaching styles to begin with? Sternberg thinks so — in part because he doesn't see teaching styles as set. Teaching style is not something one's born with, he says: "Teaching style is something we develop much later in life." His researches into the nature of intelligence have had a big impact on Sternberg's own teaching: "It's affected me a lot because a number of kids who didn't match my own style, I think I under-appreciated until I came up with the theory and began to see that they simply think and learn differently than I do."

> "If people are interested in changing and improving, then I don't think it's monstrously hard."

Sternberg: "If people are interested in changing and improving, then I don't think it's monstrously hard. It may require some effort to start giving kids different ways to show their intelligence. For example, even a choice between taking a mid-term and writing a paper: that's what I did. I required a final paper and a final exam, but at mid-term I gave them a choice. That wasn't hard to do. Putting one creative essay question on exams: I don't think that that's hard to do. Or having one question that asks 'how can you apply some concept you're learning in the course?' Or putting into a lecture one practical example."

To the objection that moving away from a firm focus on fact and theory waters down the value of grades by creating new kinds of A's for some students, Sternberg says hogwash. "You're doing that already," he says. "Usually you have a midterm, a paper and a final. Well, those are all different in different ways. If you've got a kid who got an A on the paper and a B on the mid-term, that's different from the kid who got a B on the paper and an A on the midterm. No one really believes it's all uni-dimensional. So you're already giving different types of A's and so on. When you take an arithmetical average that always happens."

Stretching Styles

But if Sternberg believes faculty need to reach out to different styles of thinking and learning, he also sees college as a time when students need to learn to stretch beyond their inclinations and learn the benefit of other styles. "It's a balancing act. Like I tell my own son: 'There are times when you can be creative and there are times when you have to be practical.' He's a guy who always wants to do things his way. The world isn't shaped that way: you can't. It would be nice to sit back and think globally all the time, but you can't. Sometimes you've got to be practical, to think locally. You have to know when it's worth fighting to do things your way and when it's better to just work within the system."

Beyond Fads

Indeed, Sternberg sees intelligence itself as malleable and progressive, and perhaps that's the true foundation of his optimism about educational reform. He sees correlations between his own approach to thinking styles and the work of others on personality types and learning styles. "These various theories have cut the same pie in different ways," he says. What worries Sternberg is when new insights or ways of talking about teaching and learning suddenly become fads instead of joining and shaping the body of existing knowledge. "That's the biggest problem in education," says Sternberg, "in that it moves in fads and that it always expects too much from any one fad. That fad doesn't work, we get disappointed, and people always say, 'Well, we should go back to basics.'

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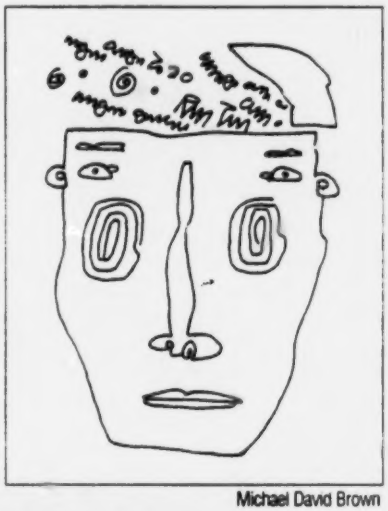
"I'm reasonably optimistic about the future of teaching. I think there are a lot of good developments, and a lot of people who are ready to change, but people expect miracles. They expect cooperative learning to work for everyone. It doesn't. To the extent that people set up these incredibly high expectations about what's going to work in every situation for everybody, they're going to be disappointed."

"It's a balancing act," he says. ▮



Michael David Brown

Speaking to Tacit Knowledge

Robert Sternberg isn't alone these days in seeing intelligence as a concept of performance that stands on three legs — the cognitive, motivational, and affective. But he's one of the leaders in trying to sort out the contents and character aspects of intelligence that haven't received much formal study. He's edited a very interesting book on the formal study of wisdom, for example, and he's written a book about love.

Currently, he's exploring "tacit knowledge," an aspect of intelligence known in different camps as heuristic, metacognitive processes, or common sense.

"It's one thing to say it's common sense," says Sternberg, "it's another to say, 'Well, what is the content of it?' That's what we try to do with the tacit knowledge work: isolate what that is."

The tacit knowledge required of college students for college, says Sternberg, may be different from that required to become a lawyer or to be a teacher, but, he believes, these different tacit knowledge bases can be assessed and developed within their contexts. Furthermore, Sternberg believes tacit knowledge is correlated "across domains." "It's not perfect," he says, "but there is a correlation between common sense in different domains."

As Sternberg sees it, tacit knowledge (which one might also look at as knowledge about how to be practical) probably can be taught, just as higher-order thinking skills can be developed. He's taken a stab at it, though not all of his colleagues approved. "I taught a course on tacit knowledge for graduate students, the tacit knowledge for being a psychologist. It covered things like how to write a grant proposal, get a job, what do you do if you get fired, how to give a lecture. It went over very well with the students who were in it, but I can't say every faculty member was pleased. Some of them believe that's not stuff you ought to be teaching."

Perhaps faculty might gain a better sense of the judgment implicit in tacit knowledge and its importance to students by looking at a survey instrument Sternberg has used to assess the tacit knowledge faculty have about their own profession. The following is excerpted from "Individual Differences in Practical Knowledge and Its Acquisition" by Sternberg and Richard K. Wagner (in *Learning and Individual Differences: Advances in Theory and Research*, 1989):

"It is your second year as an assistant professor in a prestigious psychology department. This past year you published two unrelated empirical articles in established journals. You don't, however, believe there is yet a research area that can be identified as your own. You believe yourself to be about as productive as others. The feedback about your first year of teaching has been generally good. You have as yet to serve on a university committee. There is one graduate student who has chosen to work with you. You have no external source of funding, nor have you applied for funding.

"Your goals are to become one of the top people in your field and get tenure in your department. The following is a list of things you are considering doing in the next two months. You obviously cannot do them all. Rate the importance of each by its priority as a means of reaching your goals.

a. improve the quality of your teaching

b. write a grant proposal

c. begin long-term research that may lead to a major theoretical article

d. concentrate on recruiting more students

e. serve on a committee studying university-community relations

f. begin several related short-term research projects, each of which may lead to an empirical article

g. participate in a series of panel discussions to be shown on the local public television station

h. write a paper for presentation to an upcoming American Psychological Association convention

i. adjust your work habits to increase your productivity

j. write an integrative literature review chapter in a soon to be published book (due in six weeks)

k. accept an invitation to be on an American Psychological Association task force on ethics in psychological experiments

l. ask for comments from senior members of the department on future papers

m. write a paper for possible publication in a general circulation magazine

n. become more involved in local public-service organizations

o. volunteer to be chairperson of the undergraduate curriculum committee."

For further reading:

In addition to *The Triarchic Mind* (Viking, 1988) and the collection of essays (*Learning and Individual Differences*, eds. Phillip L. Ackerman, Robert J. Sternberg, Robert Glaser and published by W.H. Freeman, 1989), Sternberg and Wagner have developed a *Thinking Styles Inventory* which comes with a manual which not only offers a concise review of the triarchic theory of intelligence, but also shows correlations between this instrument and other popular personality and learning styles inventories such as the Myers-Briggs.

The *Thinking Styles Inventory* and manual are available for $25 from Star Mountain Projects, Inc., 3237 Cranleigh Drive, Tallahassee, Florida 32308. Telephone: (904) 893-9682. ▮

STUDENTS

Diversity and the Classics

Robert Crossley
University of Massachusetts at Boston

I happen to teach texts from distant historical periods whose authors were largely white, British, Christian, and male. Over the next couple of years a diversity curriculum will be put into place. Obviously, most of my courses aren't likely to be among those chosen for this new course of study. But I do not want to cede all questions about gender, race, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, class, and cultural difference to those courses in the diversity curriculum. Diversity issues affect all courses. Who you are is not an obstacle to education, but a resource for learning, a doorway into a subject. I am interested in keeping doors open.

To that end, let me offer three examples of how issues of diversity may be addressed in courses dealing with older literature. I claim neither originality nor elegance nor unqualified success in the following episodes. As in many anecdotal descriptions of teaching, accident or the inspiration of a moment made a greater contribution than conscious pedagogy. But for me each of these three examples has provided an occasion for reflecting on the nature of literature, the vocation of teaching, and the relation of the accidents of practice to pedagogical principle. The first example comes from a core course in the Arts, the second from a core course in Philosophical and Humanistic Studies, and the third from an advanced course for English majors.

Ophelia More Tragic Than Hamlet?

In teaching *Hamlet* I have wanted to make students conscious that they are watching *two* tragedies — Hamlet's and Ophelia's. We know a lot about Hamlet's — he talks enough about it, about suicide, his isolation, his pain. We know less about Ophelia's. Hamlet has travelled widely, been well-educated, has friends, charm, wit, and dies an heroic death. Not so Ophelia.

Ophelia's father, a domineering and nosy man, keeps her on a short leash. Her brother wants to "take care" of her, in a patronizing way, and to defend her honor — that is, her marriageability. She is in love with Hamlet, but has no say about whom she can marry. In fact she is allowed little say about anything; she is a person of few words.

Unlike Hamlet, Ophelia has nobody to talk to: She has no mother, and the one other woman in the play — whom she seeks out for confidential talk — rejects her. She is manipulated by her father and brutalized by her lover, who makes her the object of a series of filthy jokes told to her face at a public event before the whole court.

As a result, she has a nervous breakdown, and although she has never once spoken of killing herself,

> Whose universe is represented by Hamlet? And does Ophelia's experience constitute a universe too?

she actually does it. The woman who wouldn't speak to her when she was alive makes a gorgeous speech about her after she is dead, and the lover who seduced and abandoned her brawls with her brother over her poor "honor."

Ophelia's tragedy is strikingly different from Hamlet's, and there are important questions to ask: How did Shakespeare think about the tragic experience of women in the cultural context of this play? What did he accomplish by setting her tragedy alongside Hamlet's? Whose tragedy is the more typical and familiar?

The tragedy of Hamlet is often taught as if its appeal and application were universal. But whose universe is represented by Hamlet, the character? And was Shakespeare perhaps a little smarter than Shakespeareans in realizing that Ophelia's experience constitutes a universe too?

Dante and Homosexuality

In the *Inferno* Dante puts the "sodomites" in the seventh circle of hell. In consigning gay men to that pocket of hell, along with usurers and blasphemers, Dante followed a conventional fourteenth-century Christian classification of homosexuality as a violation of nature. How are twentieth-century readers, many of whom will not accept a view of sexual orientation as sinful or unnatural, going to respond to this part of the poem? Can we be sure Dante himself fully endorsed the system he drew on here? Or is it possible that, like many artists who operate under an authoritarian regime, Dante sought to subvert and criticize the very terms he felt obliged to employ? I ask students why Dante devotes far more space to the sodomites than to the usurers and blasphemers, and why he includes among them his own teacher Brunetto Latini to whom, in the course of a moving conversation in hell, Dante the Pilgrim says:

My mind is etched
(and now my heart is pierced)
With your kind image,
loving and paternal
When, living in the world, hour after hour
You taught me how man makes himself eternal.
And while I live my tongue shall always speak
Of my debt to you, and of my gratitude.

If this extraordinary outburst were to be explained as merely a gesture of respect toward someone Dante knew — who happened, unfortunately, to be gay — what in the world are we to make of a *second* group of sodomites who encounter Dante in hell and explicitly ask him if he doesn't find them "repulsive"? Dante's reply is that he wanted to leap into the flames with them and "put my arms around them." He recognizes this group of men — not personal acquaintances of his — as honorable countrymen whose achievements should be celebrated by those who remain alive above the earth. In tears he says:

Repulsion, no, but grief
For your condition spread throughout my heart
(And years will pass before it fades away).

Had I not been thinking about how the episode of the sodomites might offend or trouble gay students in my

course on Humanistic Perspectives, I am not sure I would have discovered the, to me, unexpected humanity of Dante's presentation. Theology may have required him to represent homosexuality as a punishable sin, but the artist of the *Inferno* seems to have taken a more generous view.

Milton, Blacks, Women, and Freedom

In my advanced course in English Epic Poetry we recently spent eight weeks on *Paradise Lost*. A couple of weeks into the poem, as we began Book IV, we hit a snag, one that I thought I could predict. One student, Andrea Goode, announced that she had a problem with Eve. I launched into the beginnings of an analysis of the lines on Eve and Adam that have bedeviled many modern readers and caused some women to stop reading with Book IV:

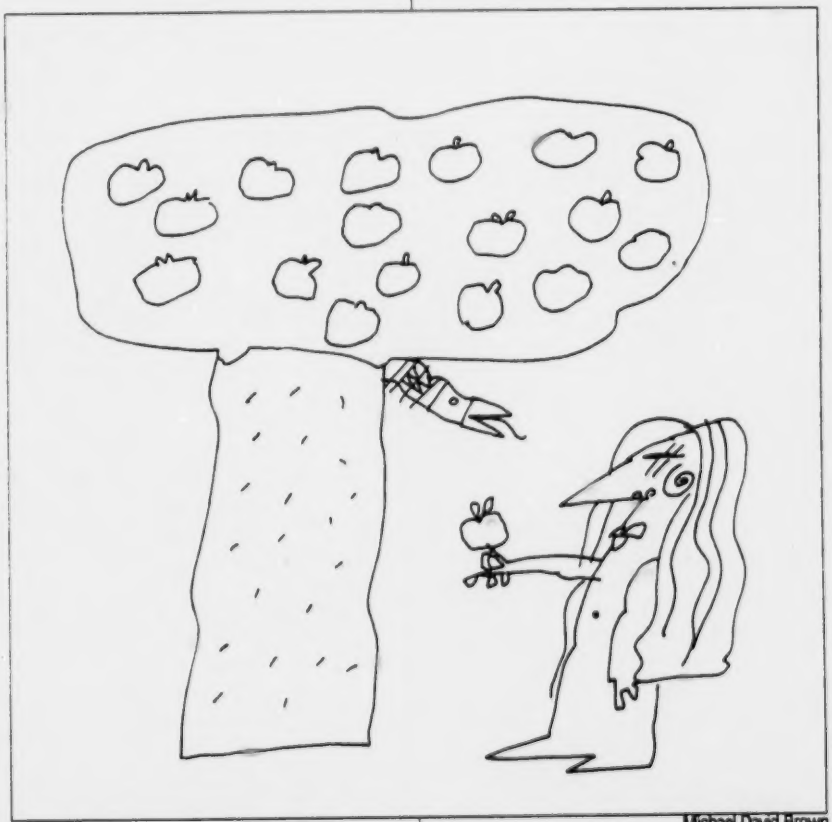
Not equal, as their sex not equal seem'd;
For contemplation he and valor form'd
For softness she and sweet attractive grace,
He for God only, she for God in him.

But as I started my well-rehearsed comments on Milton and gender and how doctrine might not always accord with the dramatic presentation of Eve, Andrea interrupted and said that although she wasn't crazy about *those* lines, they weren't what really bothered her. She resisted Eve's "unadorned golden tresses." What she wanted to know was — what was there for an African-American in this representation of a blonde Eve, so much like all the other blonde heroines of canonical English and American texts she'd been required to read as an English major.

It was a question that I was not entirely unprepared for. I had thought of giving a short lecture on the uses that have been made of Milton's poem when we reached the end of our eight-week study, but Andrea's question made me realize there was something wrong with the sequence I had planned. After eight weeks Andrea (and who else in the class that remained silent?) might already have spent too much time in frustration with a text that seemed irrelevant, at best, to a contemporary black American woman. She was right to raise the issue when it first arose in the poem. In response, I acknowledged, first, what we would *not* find in Milton and shouldn't strain to find: an image of Eve that will fit our own recent understandings of human origins. I offered the class what I knew of recent work by molecular biologists who have studied the DNA recovered from human fossils and have posited an "African Eve," a single maternal ancestor of all of us — and pretty certainly not a blonde. If the biologists can maintain their theory, Milton's northern European Eve — already a highly unlikely representation — will definitively become a relic of British provincialism.

However, if Milton was culturally unable to imagine an African Eve, that doesn't by itself mean that African-Americans must write off *Paradise Lost*, a text whose chief theme, arguably, is human freedom. I told several anecdotes to make the point. One is that when the woman whose name (Phillis Wheatley) appears on the building in which we were studying went to London as a literary celebrity in the late eighteenth century, the Lord Mayor officially greeted her with a gift of an edition of *Paradise Lost*. That Phillis Wheatley, a former slave and the first published black woman poet in North America, should be given Milton's poem in recognition of her work is itself suggestive. It is also not a unique instance. Throughout the nineteenth century American women, black and white, found *Paradise Lost* a document of liberation. In 1846 Margaret Fuller went so far as to call Milton "more emphatically American than any author who has lived in the United States." Most impressively, one of the most important American feminists, Anna Julia Cooper, in her 1892 study of black women, *A Voice from the South*, wrote: "Milton is the right poet for people who are writhing under a mighty wrong," one of those poets who "dignify the world for their having lived."

For Andrea Goode, this information made it possible to go on reading *Paradise Lost*; for me, it was a thrilling reaffirmation both of the value of literary study and of the ways in which multicultural questioning can deepen and broaden the scope of academic inquiry. ■



Michael David Brown

TESTS

Making Tests Teach

Philosophically, Bob Jones doesn't think much of grades. "I'd love to have 'pass-fail' and 'pass with honors,' or 'pass-retake.' The A B C D F is archaic, but it still dominates higher ed," he says. So, as an energetic pragmatist, Jones, a professor of education at the University of Houston - Clear Lake, has immersed himself in testing and some of its less-studied implications for instruction.

As the accompanying article by Jones and a colleague makes clear, their researches over the last five years have revealed a surprising lack of correlation between what's taught in the schools and what's tested for. But the problem spills over into higher education as well, according to Jones. "I don't know of a college textbook that doesn't come with a teacher's guide now," says Jones, "and a lot of them come with computer disks with tests on them. It's true in all the education courses and of course they become a model for the next generation of public school teachers."

With correlations of less than 40% between what's taught and what's tested in the public schools, it's no wonder college students plague their instructors with the question, "Is this going to be on the test?" Jones says that question reflects the fact that the students who make it to college have learned how to survive the teaching-testing dichotomy. "For every student you have sitting in your college class," says Jones, "four people have dropped out. And the number one cause of at-risk students leaving school is inability to pass tests."

For Jones, who believes Schools of Education are among the worst offenders of curriculum misalignment within higher education, the implications are clear. First, *align the curriculum*, that is to say, establish a close and deliberate connection between what you want students to know, what you teach, and what you test for. Second, make sure this "reverse engineering" of your *instructional planning* is connected to your *assessment planning* by incorporating an intensive test review process into your teaching.

Connecting Teaching and Testing

"I didn't think of 'review' as a part of teaching when I started this," Jones admits. "I thought, like most of us have always thought, that teaching and testing were two linear processes. First you teach and then you stop everything and there's this big gap, and then there's testing. What I realize now is that review is the linking process that effects what's called curriculum alignment by some or 'gaining closure' as the teaching people call it."

With correlations of less than 40% between what's taught and what's tested in the public schools, it's no wonder college students plague their instructors with the question, "Is this going to be on the test?"

Only last year did Jones find a serious book that included a chapter on the test-review process as a part of teaching — Peter Airasian's *Classroom Assessment* (McGraw Hill, 1991).

Airasian, Jones reports, was a student of Benjamin Bloom's, and Bloom was the educational researcher who posed what's known as the challenge of the "Two Sigma Problem" public education. What Bloom asked was what teaching-learning conditions might be found that enabled a majority of students in group instruction situations to attain achievement levels equivalent to those generally associated only with tutoring. In an unpublished study Jones and Steinbrink maintain their research shows Bloom's challenge can be met through a combination of effects achieved by coordinating curriculum alignment with cooperative test review teams.

Jones has heard the objection that "of course he'll get higher test scores if he just teaches what's on the test" many times. By now it makes him laugh. "You teach *to* the test; you don't teach the test," he says. "With me, the test is the object of a huge intellectual game," says Jones. "Let's make it human. Let's attack it, and let's apply everything we know about it like cooperative review groups, aligned curriculum material, and so on. Why not have some fun preparing for it?"

Aggressive Reviews

Ironically, Jones teaches "Tests and Measurement," and the test review process he uses in his own classes doesn't sound like fun. It sounds like a lot of work. Early in the semester, Jones gives students a sheet with sample test questions down the left side and sample test review items for those questions down the right. He tells them that two weeks before every exam, they'll be given items like those on the right. There may be as many as seventy-five items each with a citation to text or lab materials already covered. Students must prepare written responses to the items to gain admission to Jones' review session, a session where each item is covered again.

Is he being reductive about knowledge? "I'm being reductive," Jones laughs, "but not *ad absurdum*."

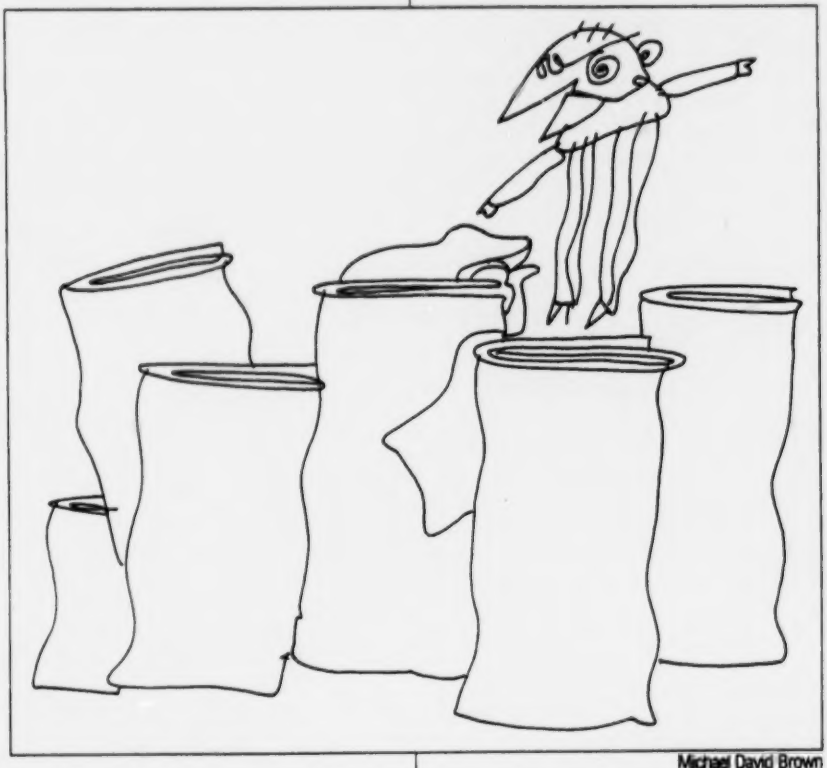
Has beginning with the test and working backwards through an instructional plan made Jones a better teacher? "No, as a matter of fact a student was in here this week and said, 'You know, Dr. Jones, you're not really a good teacher. You kinda ramble and you're hard to follow sometimes, but, God, you give good tests.' "

"I can live with that," says Jones, "because that's my objective: to give the perfect test, a test that breaks out of cycles of test anxiety and poor curriculum alignment and all that." What the student seems to mean and what Jones seems to accept is the fact that he's not a particularly good lecturer: "I've pretty much quit lecturing, but in the course of an hour, I fill the board with concept maps," he says.

The Performance Factor

If there's more than one way to skin the instructional cat, there's more than one reason to give attention to the importance of tests. Besides reducing the dropout rate, especially among diverse student populations, it's a fact that exit tests socially similar to Germany's dreaded *Abitur* have become a mandated part of education in many states, including Texas. The good news, says Jones, is that the tests are getting better. The new competency test for eighth- and twelfth-graders in Texas will soon require a performance component. After they finish the "pencil-and-paper part," as Jones calls it, they'll go to a table, follow a protocol and test various brands of paper towel for absorbency, record the data, and then write a paragraph on which they'd buy if absorbency were the thing they were looking for.

This kind of test, not unlike the project components in the courses he teaches, can be an aid to learning, he says. "The more we can move away from multiple choice, abstract, low-level testing to the higher-order, interpretative, hands-on, authentic assessment, yeah, tests are useful."



Michael David Brown

Assessment Planning: Measuring the Improvement in Teaching

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During the past decade, instruction in the classroom has improved. Today, based on supervisory assessment data and exit testing of newly certified candidates, teachers are better prepared to skillfully present concepts and skills than ever before. Everyone involved should feel good about this situation; however, there is one real problem. With all of the documented improvements in instruction, student test scores have not improved significantly. Critics point this out and call for more controls on teacher preparation and supervision. Others call for alternate assessment methods and some question the assumption that good teaching produces good test scores.

A few years ago we took a look at this situation from a curriculum rather than an instruction viewpoint: "What if teachers are doing a good job of teaching but the tests are not measuring what is taught?" In other words what if the curriculum material taught was not the curriculum material tested? To answer this question, we conducted surveys of the science, social studies and mathematics textbooks in adoption in Texas. The results were surprising. The publisher-furnished test-review items had less than a 40% correlation with the publisher-furnished test items. In simple terms, the teachers were teaching one thing and testing another when they used the publisher-furnished materials. National surveys reported that over 90% of teachers used these materials as furnished. If teachers didn't improve on this situation orally, a real curriculum alignment problem did exist.

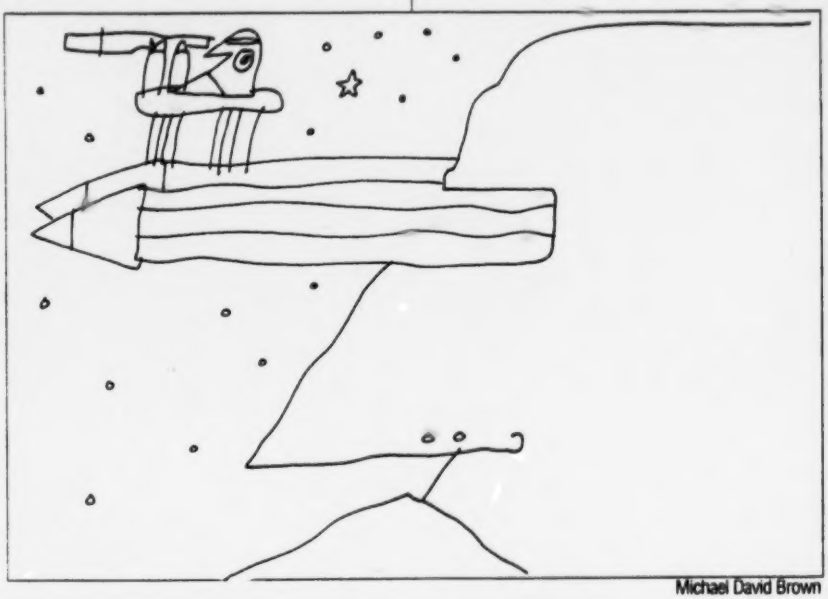
We began working on this problem and found that some teachers did an excellent job of orally aligning instruction with testing, but the number of these teachers was not large. The ones who did the best job and had the best test scores used some kind of a **test review process** that linked their instruction to the test. Several of the successful teachers told us they had good success with writing their own test review items. Using this information as a starting point, we asked a group of teachers to examine their tests and write their own test review items. With a little practice, it was easy to do. Teachers simply used questioning strategies to pose the review item or items a student would need to know to respond to given test items. We called these "home-made" review materials **Focused Study Items**. Since they were to be used only *after* instruction was over, we had teachers put the page number or other location reference on each item. This focusing process cured the curriculum alignment problem. The Focused Study Items linked the content and skills actually taught to the test.

Then we studied the test review process. It wasn't there. In an extensive review of the research literature, we found a few sentences on test review here and a few statements there, but nothing really useful. So we developed our own test review process. Using what we knew about cooperative learning, we asked teachers to place students in mixed ability groups of three or four members. These "Home Teams" were charged to help each member make his or her best score on the test. Teachers also assumed a new role; they agreed to become academic "coaches" for these test review teams. After explaining this new relationship, the teachers gave the Focused Study Items to the test review teams and assisted them in locating the answers and responses. After all the team members understood the test review items, the teams then competed in review games. These review games, "Family Feud," "Trash Basketball," "Quiz Bowl," and others were a pleasant surprise. Students would learn anything to play the "game." In studies involving over 100 teachers and 4000 students, the test scores of students who used the experimental process averaged 10 to 20 points higher than the scores of students who used "traditional" test review procedures. It was apparent that planning for assessment combined with good instruction would produce improved student test scores.

So what does this research mean? From our viewpoint it says that **assessment planning** is at least as important as **instructional planning**, *if* your measure of success is the student test scores.

Second, the research can be used at any level of instruction and in any instructional setting. For instance, one of the authors has used aligned review items, cooperative test review teams and focused test review procedures in his university classes for the past five years. Over this period of time, the class means have risen by over seven points or approximately one standard deviation.

In summary, any teacher can take control of teaching-testing alignment by using the simple eight step assessment planning process developed by teachers in our longitudinal study.



Michael David Brown

A Model Assessment Plan

1. Before beginning instruction for a unit, plan the test you want to give or examine the published test carefully; be sure each test item is accurate, clearly written and measures what you intend to teach. Delete or change items that don't meet these criteria.
2. Determine what student *performance products* will be required during the instructional unit. Develop a form for recording individual or group grades on these products. Determine the relative percentage of performance products to tests.
3. Teach the unit in any way you choose; do your best job. Keep the unit test in mind but do not teach the test items specifically. Monitor individual and group student work and evaluate performance products as they are completed. Provide specific feedback on concepts and skills.
4. After instruction is complete, re-examine the unit test. Add, modify or delete items as needed. Write one or more *Focused Study Items* for each test item. Cover all of the material on the test. Place a location reference at the end of each Focused Study Item.
5. Distribute the Focused Study Items to *Test Review Teams*. Each Test Review Team should have three to five members with mixed academic abilities. Direct each Test Review Team to locate the responses for the Focused Study Items and quiz each other until all members of the team have mastered the material.
6. Conduct a *Review Game* among the Test Review Teams using the Focused Study Items as questions or tasks. Play the game for small, non-academic rewards and team recognition. After the *Review Game*, answer all student questions and correct any misperceptions. [Jones admits he does not use games in his own teaching. They work better, he feels, in primary and secondary settings, but he knows of several college faculty who use them effectively.]
7. Administer the test to your students. Tell them they are well-prepared and you expect each of them to make a good score on the test.
8. Score the unit test and compute the individual and group averages. Provide feedback and analyze individual and group performance. Recognize sustained and improved team performance.

If all teachers will develop and implement an *Assessment Plan* similar to the one used in our project, we believe there will be a noticeable improvement in student test scores. The reason for this is simple: Assessment planning complements and reinforces instructional planning.

Dialogues in Design: Journals in the Studio

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One of the challenges in teaching is to become a catalyst for productive thinking. But while the classroom setting may be an ideal place to present and exchange information enthusiastically, other aspects of teaching benefit from other settings, other formats — journals, for example. Typically, I've found journals more often used to accumulate ideas and inspirations in studio art courses than in studio analysis courses such as the introductory foundations of design course which I teach. But I've found journals work well on the critical side as well. They help students become more thoughtful in their analyses and more venturesome in their explorations.

My studio design class takes a hands-on approach to learning, an approach which heightens personal discovery and understanding. However, when I ask students to express their opinions and ideas about design orally, they sometimes seem awkward in their responses. Students usually explain that they don't have the skills to critique effectively or fairly, or they don't feel confident about what they have to say. In fact they may just be shy or lack public-speaking skills.

Journals provide a neutral, stressless forum to rehearse one's thinking, including emotional aspects like indignation, confusion or joy, as well as more reasoned judgments. In journals, the thinking process is less directed toward recitation, rote learning and on-stage performance, and more focused on self-direction and commitment to the subject.

Journals provide additional opportunity for articulating personal questions as well as answers. After all, a good question often provides half the answer.

My objectives in using the journal assignment in my design foundations class are to enhance discussion about design, establish an informal dialogue with students, and to encourage them to use (and thus come to understand) design terminology.

Unexpected Connections

I have clear objectives for the use of journals in my course, objectives generally focused on enhancing awareness of different aspects of design, but student journals often reflect (and cement) a fuller learning experience than I expected. I assign three journal entries, one every five weeks. They are intended to complement and enhance the students' current studio projects.

The first entry addresses research in design and the contribution of cultural diversity to the **design language**. A visit to the local museum provides the basis for these directions. The corresponding studio assignment at this time is a handmade portfolio. Ideas for themes, colors and patterns for decorating can be generated through the exposure to the museum collection.

Journals provide a neutral, stressless forum to rehearse one's thinking, including emotional aspects as well as more reasoned judgments.

The museum research and production of the portfolio enhance discussion of symbolism, vernacular design, and the design process — criterion and creativity, analysis and synthesis, and symbiotic relationships. I notice that many students appreciate the level of design in what they once thought were rather limited cultures. One student writes: "What surprised me was that when I think of Indians, the first thing that goes through my head is the word PRIMITIVE. But looking at the various displays [I found that] their tools, robes, sacks, etc. were all quite intricate. The artwork is bright and lively. They make conventional things quite decorative and interesting — spiritual feeling."

The second entry asks for a personal inventory as a consumer in our society. What objects does the student own that work well and which do not? What was the reason for the purchase — function or aesthetics? Students are involved in color studies and communications projects, such as logo design, during this time. This combination of assignments presents **the psychology of the object**, psychology behind advertising, symbolism in communications, and the impact of visual phenomena in the marketplace.

With the psychology of an object in mind, students can base questions on observed detail. One student is interested in the functionality of chairs: "Why are rocking chairs always made of wood, or at least, not upholstered? Hard wood can deter people. However, that's the challenge for a good craftsman — to use hard materials that look inviting . . . Curvilinear lines give a graceful feel." Another student investigates the decorative appeal of a clock: "I have learned with a clock like this that it doesn't just have to tell time, it can give hints to the personality of the owner — i.e. happy, wild in this case!" Some entries explore the metaphorical quality of the object. One student looks at the design of small banks — the safe versus the piggy bank. She asks, "Why do we want children to associate pigs with money and greed?"

The last entry requests a critique of a public or private interior. The student identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the space, and may suggest solutions for proposed problem areas. Issues of light, structure, material selections, function and color are grist for this discussion. The studio project assigned at this time is a three dimensional construction of the students' choice. They can make it functional or not.

I find that the last entry, perhaps because it is assigned near the end of the course, is usually the one in which students seem most involved — using more descriptive detail and opinion in their writing. One student describes her reaction to the design of a hotel lobby: "The first adjective I think of

for the decor of this room is plush. . . . In the entrance and throughout the room there are white wooden pillars that are fluted. This adds, again, to the elegant and classy theme. . . . Instead of it being overpowering and impersonal, you feel welcome to come in, make yourself at home and have a nice chat with friends."

Resonant Learning

Each journal entry concerns the designed environment. I look for evidence of keen observation and critical reflective thinking, which complements the more flexible, relaxed and creative mode of designing for studio projects. I encourage recognition of ideas, quality, and value in design. I ask students to use design terminology so that it becomes less mysterious, and more personal in application. I also encourage them to include illustrations such as rough sketches, or photographs, to enhance the analytical process, as well as provide a visual reference.

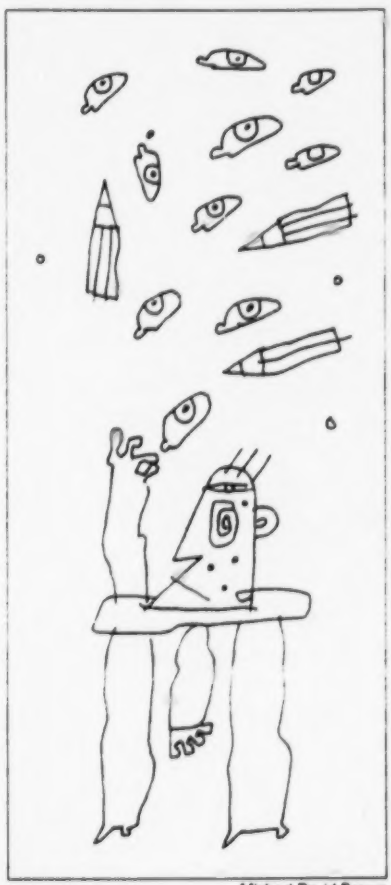
Writing stimulates and organizes thought in a different way from sketching and designing — or reciting in class, for that matter. The combination involves students in a fuller dialogue about design.

I respond in writing to these entries, reminding the students to make detailed observations, and attempt to create a dialogue with the student based on the ideas presented in the journal.

Because the course introduces a lot of information, the journals help to organize depth of investigation into each area of design. Entries, as well as studio assignments, are structured and sequenced to aid the students' development of design sensibility and vocabulary. The journals are graded (albeit the grade contributes only a very small percentage of the overall grade) to ensure participation, although I usually find students are interested enough in the written assignments.

Creative thinking deals with problem solving and idea generation. Knowledge of a subject and activity like design derives from personal exploration and discovery as well as directed study. The use of a journal, especially in a design class, seems to enhance understanding and awareness of quality in design. Appreciation of integrity and cultural diversity arises through this experience of observation and further empowers students in their quest to explore ideas about design.

In my teaching, the journal has found a place, not only as a means of getting students to loosen up and brainstorm creatively, but also as a means of helping them sharpen their critical and evaluative perceptions. Besides, journal writing is an activity they seem to enjoy.



Michael David Brown

Religion, Critical Thinking and Design

"One may understand any piece of knowledge or any product of human intellect as a design. As one critical thinking strategy we have used four design questions to help students examine or explain a concept:

1. What is its purpose or purposes? Take the term 'ritual' as an example. The purpose of a ritual is to invoke a sacred presence or to commemorate a sacred occasion such as Passover.

2. What is its structure? To get at the structure of an object or of a concept is to name the parts, features, and materials that constitute it. Using the ritual of the Mass as an example, its structure involves the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the sacrament.

3. What are model cases? Model cases have to do with examples, maps, counter examples, countermodels and analogies. In the Roman Catholic liturgy, examples would be the stark nature of the ritual for Good Friday as opposed to the joyful, celebratory ritual of Easter with the ringing of bells at the Gloria and the repetition of the Alleluia.

4. What arguments explain and evaluate the object? This question leads students to evaluate the pros and cons of a ritual, explain certain of its features, and helps students state the deep principles involved in ritual. Using the example of the Mass in Roman Catholicism, one could show that the structured nature of the ritual creates an openness to the holy and to an experience of communion. This would be a positive argument in behalf of ritual. However, ritual may have a downside. Attendance at Mass may become a mere external habit or it may serve other ends. One may attend the Easter liturgy to show off one's Easter outfit rather than to participate meaningfully in a sacramental event.

These four design questions help students appreciate the fact that concepts and basic terms (even though they seem to be a self-evident part of their own lives) are not simply given but are constructs of human thinking that can be explained, examined, and evaluated."

Excerpted from "Infusing Critical Thinking into the Study of Religion" by Richard Penaskovic and John F. vonEschenback in Spotlight on Teaching *(Vol. 1, No. 1) published by the American Academy of Religion.*
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VIEWPOINT

Teaching Scrutinized — A Plan for Rewarding Faculty as Teachers

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Recently, in the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching study of American faculty members, only 25% of faculty nationwide viewed research as their highest priority. Most college and university professors do not publish regularly or engage in on-going scholarly research. Most report that they don't want to do that, because they want to focus on teaching, which includes spending time with students. But those who do not publish fail to obtain meaningful professional recognition and, unless their institutional culture values the student-oriented professor, many are left feeling poorly used and underappreciated, no matter how well they teach or how effective they are in stimulating intellectual inquiry in their students. Faculty from teaching institutions — community colleges, for example — often feel undervalued within society in large measure because they are teachers and not, as a rule, researchers.

My purpose here is to propose an alternative reward system for faculty members that will support teaching and learning and stimulate faculty to share their talents and ideas as successful instructors. This system is based on the features of the model we use for rewarding research productivity, especially the peer review aspects of this model.

I propose that a parallel system be established to reward, acknowledge, and disseminate teaching products in the way that research products are currently rewarded, acknowledged and disseminated. Each professional association which publishes a journal or magazine through a peer review mechanism should establish a parallel distribution mechanism whose contents are successful teaching ideas in the fields of interest to the association. A review board would establish criteria for review, criteria that are suited to the particular discipline or field of study. Selection for inclusion would be by peer review, although reviewers would not only read, view, or otherwise be exposed to the product, but would also apply the teaching idea in their own classrooms and include student responses in their evaluation of the teaching product. Some of the common sorts of teaching products published in this way would include case studies, lectures, innovative syllabi, creative examinations, computer-aided instructional programs and simulations, games, and descriptions of role playing scenarios. In addition, the sponsoring organization would identify a repository and distribution center for videotapes, some computer programs, and related materials. Regular detailed descriptions and reviews of these latter kinds of teaching products would be published alongside the teaching cases, role playing, and lectures, as well as information about obtaining the products on file at the distribution center.

Evaluations of faculty performance would then be able to include two components having to do with teaching — reviews of syllabi, student evaluations, and observation materials, similar to current practice at many institutions, and a second component, teaching products that are evaluated and reviewed by peers external to the institution and that appear in print or in the depository for widespread dissemination to faculty teaching like courses throughout the country (and the world). If nationwide peer review brings with it a measure of prestige and recognition, such a system might not only result in more critical attention being paid to college teaching on a national level, but also, greater rewards and recognition for excellent teaching on one's own campus.

Despite the performance aspects of teaching, teaching is a private endeavor. Done behind closed doors, teaching has been protected from open view with the cloak of academic freedom. Many of us have hidden poor teaching and many others have failed to be noticed for their excellent teaching because of a reluctance to tread on protected ground. An open system that is voluntarily engaged in will take teaching out of the shadows both for scrutiny and for celebration.

I believe that such a system would

- provide an additional and badly needed creative outlet for faculty members
- recognize and meaningfully reward faculty endeavors to improve teaching and learning within and outside the classroom
- stimulate faculty members to evaluate their own effectiveness as they participate in submitting teaching products and serving as reviewers of others' efforts, and
- improve teaching generally through the dissemination of worthy teaching products. ■

Submitting Manuscripts

Not all manuscripts we receive at *The National Teaching and Learning Forum* are suitable for our purposes, but we are grateful to all who have submitted. We continue to welcome manuscripts from readers on teaching and learning. Articles may address any aspect of the topic(s), and may be discipline-specific or general in nature. However, authors should keep a diverse readership in mind.

Submissions may not exceed 1500 words, except in very unusual circumstances, and should be shorter whenever possible.

Editorial submissions should be mailed directly to:

James Rhem
Executive Editor
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213 Potter Street
Madison, WI 53715.

Laugh and the World Laughs With You

Faculty hear a lot about enthusiasm, passion, charisma in discussions of effective teaching. Perhaps they ought to hear more about humor.

A paper by J. Chrispens and B. Bainum read at a meeting of the Western Psychological Association in San Francisco last year reported on a study which found humor in the classroom a powerful teaching enhancement — one which had a strong correlation not only with very positive ratings of the humorous faculty by students, but also with more hours spent studying for courses led by fun professors.

At Pacific Union College a group of 142 students returned a questionnaire evaluating eight humorous and three nonhumorous instructors. The humorous instructors rated higher, but the ratings went further than a general good feeling about them on the part of their students. Analysis of the questionnaires indicated the students felt these instructors were more supportive in the classroom, had higher respect for student opinions, straightforwardness, honesty, interest in student problems, and a variety of other measures as well. Students considered the more humorous instructors more rational, more clever, and more sensitive than their nonhumorous colleagues.

Though they weren't rated differentially on effectiveness, knowledge, intelligence, or the overall value of the class, the students of the humorous instructors indicated they spent more time studying than their unamused peers with nonhumorous, "serious" teachers.

Perhaps the students were picking up on the truth of something Horace Walpole said in the eighteenth century: "The world is a comedy to those that think, a tragedy to those that feel."

Of course, they could also have been kidding....

Chrispens, J. & Bainum, B. Humor in the Classroom: Is it Effective? *Paper read at the Western Psychological Association, San Francisco, April 1991.*

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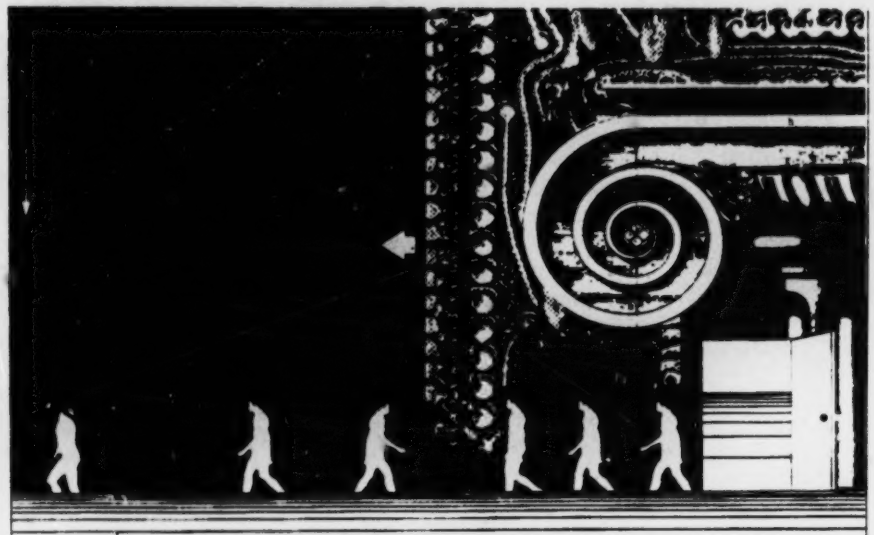

TV OR NOT TV

Powerful prejudices die hard even in academe. But it's the nature of education to kill prejudice, even among its own. That's what's happening with television. Long reviled as the emblem of a culture in decline, television seems ready to lead the vigor of liberal learning back into the mainstream of American life.

Ironically, we may be ready to use the power of television because TV is no longer the issue. The issue — one that teaching television directly enjoins — is whether higher education is about passing on received opinions or cultivating a critical engagement with experience. If it's about the latter, new attitudes toward and uses of television offer teachers perhaps the most powerful cultural and cognitive shoehorn ever imagined.

Liberating Curricula

Robert Thompson, who teaches at Syracuse University, is perhaps TV's most vocal champion: "I'm very convinced, sincerely convinced — and not just because this is what I do for a living — that the last real hope for liberal arts education as we've traditionally defined it in this country is to acknowledge the usefulness of teaching popular culture, television, whatever you want to include in that, within the university at a very early level. I do think it's the only entryway into the kinds of things we're supposed to teach in liberal education. We need to remember the etymological base of liberal education is to be 'liberating,' freeing, allowing us to think for ourselves, and I don't think the way we've been going about it is working, and I think we've had a lot of time to see that it's not working using the traditional ways we've tried."

Basically, Thompson believes higher education ought to be about the development of higher order, critical thinking as a mental lifestyle. Freshman studies curricula go wrong, he believes, when they try to cultivate these methods of engagement with the world using materials, histories, and contexts completely remote from the students' experience. "These critical thinking methods are unfamiliar to most students," he says, "and if you tie on top of teaching unfamiliar methods a set of equally unfamiliar intimidating texts — novels, romantic poetry, Elizabethan drama, 19th-century symphonic music — you've completely alienated 90% of your class right there. You're teaching something that's unfamiliar with something that's unfamiliar."

For Thompson, the ubiquity of TV in students' lives is a professor's dream come true. "When students walk into the classroom," he says, "they've done all the reading. They know the specifics of what I'm talking about, and we can go into a level of discussion that wouldn't be possible until graduate school in most other subjects."

Susan Neuman, a psychologist who teaches at Temple University, agrees completely: "What you're doing is

teaching [students] a mode of thinking that they will apply to any medium. It's not the medium that really matters," she says. "[What matters is] that they are engaged in higher level thinking. Students feel efficacious in watching television," says Neuman. Being engaged on a critical level — and enjoying the feeling of being engaged on this level — gives students an immediate experience of their higher cognitive capacities. Not only do they like the feeling, she says, the experience makes the movement over to critical engagement with other kinds of material much easier. "Even language-minority students feel they are totally capable of watching television and understanding it," says Neuman, "so it is an easy medium for easing people into a cognitive activity that really is quite complex."

> "TV has the same capacity for inference generation as print," Neuman maintains. "It's the content that matters, not the medium."

Viewing Is Reading

Neuman laughs that after 15 years of scientific study of the medium, she sometimes becomes so exasperated at hearing it denounced that she swears to her husband she's going to give up her research. But she doesn't. She sticks with it because she believes in the potential of television to develop literacy across media and in all age groups. "We always thought that print was the higher level medium," she says, "but that's not true." Neuman's research has found that television watching is a "schema-driven" process very similar to the cognitive model involved in reading. "As people are watching television, they are constructing knowledge," she says. "They may at times look like zombies before the television set, but they aren't. They're integrating their prior knowledge. They are fitting it or slot-fitting it into an organizational frame they have in their mind."

"TV has the same capacity for inference generation as print," Neuman maintains. "It's the content that matters, not the medium."

Arguments championing the cognitive potential of television almost always become coopted by denunciations of its content. Neuman admits that unarguable cultural milestones like Alex Haley's *Roots* or Ken Burns's *The Civil War* haven't changed the (un)popular image of television among academics. One reason for that lies in the fact that the language level of the typical, mass television, network program remains at about the fourth-grade level, she says. But that, too, is changing. With the advent of videotape and specialized, "narrow-casting" cable channels, the monolithic uses of the medium are breaking down and its potential as a medium of teaching and learning is being recognized. Indeed, Neuman's research shows that even with a fourth-grade language level dominant, the medium already has a powerful positive effect that most academics (and most print media) refuse to acknowledge.

"We did an analysis of over two million children — a gigantic study on a national level involving eight states around the country," she says. "We looked at achievement scores — primary, intermediate and high school level, plus a sub-sample of adults — and we found that those who watched between two and four hours of television a day had the highest achievement scores. After four hours, there's a falloff, but between two and four, those people *always* score the highest. No one ever talks about that although it's been widely reported," she says. People want a devil to blame, she says, and because TV is at once pervasive and in a sense anonymous, it's an easy target.

Of Cultures and Canons

If many academics would be willing to accept TV as a kind of cognitive primer on the way to Dickens, Descartes and Darwin, they find TV's advocates unwilling to accept step-child status. David Bianculli, television critic for National Public Radio whose book *Teleliteracy: Taking Television*

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Seriously came out last year, says: "What I don't like is the implied superiority of the stuff we're getting to: We'll use TV only as a hook; once we [get students to] learn these skills by using it, then we'll get into F. Scott Fitzgerald, and that will be really something. But F. Scott Fitzgerald may have less to say to this time than the TV shows you're using to get to him."

Talk like that appears to challenge the value of the canon of great works and ideas which many regard as the foundation stones of liberal education. Even among his peers, Robert Thompson's extended consideration of *The Love Boat* often leaves more skeptics than converts. Thompson admits, "It's a mischievous choice." He makes it to make a point about received opinion and independent thinking.

Thompson asks his classes which is better, Shakespeare or *The Love Boat*. They all answer, "Shakespeare." "Then I ask them how much Shakespeare they've read," says Thompson. They've read very little. "Then how do you know it's better?" he asks. "Well, *The Love Boat*'s stories are two-dimensional," students respond. "Well, what about *Romeo and Juliet*?" Thompson counters. "*The Love Boat* is unrealistic," students say. "You mean in every Shakespeare comedy when someone puts on someone else's tunic and is instantly mistaken for them, that's realistic?" Thompson goads them. And on and on the discussion goes.

"Suddenly," says Thompson, "they realize their idea that Shakespeare is superior comes not from their own appreciation and love of Shakespeare or from the usual criteria brought up in immediate objection, but it comes exclusively from some system of judgment that someone else has given them. They got it in the same way that racism, sexism and a lot of other things are passed on — unthinkingly."

Like John Fiske, who teaches at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Thompson is willing to risk the sanctity of cultural canons in order to liberate students' desire and ability to think for themselves. Says Fiske, "Maybe in TV we're lucky because there isn't that old canonical way of thinking. I want students to realize that when we make critical value judgments, the values don't come out of nowhere," says Fiske. "I want to disabuse them of the idea that critical value judgments are in some way universal, based on a universal aesthetic and humanistic, platonic notion of the best that has been said and thought and all that sort of thing. Value judgments are socially located as everything else is." Fiske's line of reasoning (and Thompson's) leads to a kind of cultural relativism that makes a lot of people uncomfortable. Ultimately, it trusts that the process of active critical evaluation will always settle on a canon appropriate to the culture's needs and values, and that, as in the process of combustion, nothing will really be lost.

Feeding the (Critical) Thinking Monster

Far from unleashing barbarians, Thompson, Fiske, Neuman and others teaching television and via television see the result as creating an intelligent democracy. "My charge to students," says Thompson, "has two parts to it based on the fact that the critical spirit has a voracious appetite. First, I give them the machine of critical thinking, the critical posture, and second, I have to tell them how to keep it running." Once students experience independent and critical thinking within themselves, they find their appetite for it awakened; they want to do it.

Thompson recalls teaching in a less-than-prestigious state school in upstate New York early in his career and having a student come up at the end of his course and ask for a list of classic reading material so he could "get up to speed" during the summer. "If that happened to an English teacher, they'd probably die and go to heaven," says Thompson. "Generally English departments are major enemies of what we do in TV, but at the end of one of my classes, I've produced a student who's become hungry not only to apply critical thinking to television, but to begin to go a little further. I've produced a student who's ready in fact to enroll in an English department, and I don't think that happens at the end of most freshman intros to lit."

To feed the hunger for critical engagement that's been awakened in them, says Thompson, students quickly find they need to learn history, to read, to seek contrary opinions and more information. "Suddenly, what you've created is not someone who can be the first person on the block to talk intelligently about TV, but someone who will forever have an appetite and an intellectual curiosity to learn, and to me that is what a liberal arts education is supposed to create."

And for the professor there's one more benefit: "The great thing about it is you don't have to wait a couple of years," says Thompson. There are times in class when you can almost literally see the scales falling from their eyes. It's a heady experience, I'll tell you."

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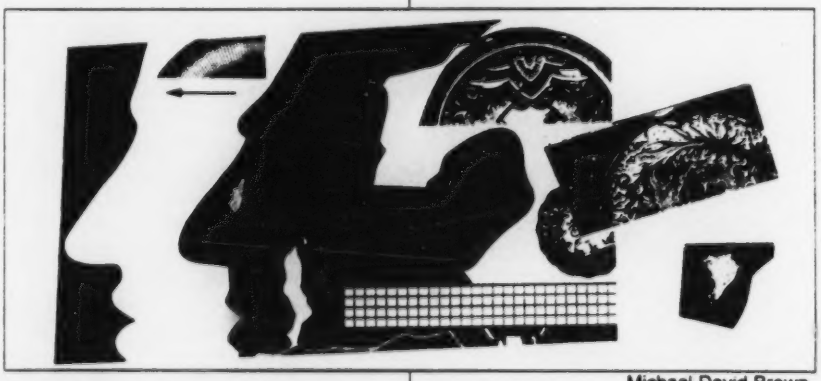

Michael David Brown

CASE STUDIES

Lake Wobegon West High School

The following case is excerpted with permission from a longer case copyrighted by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. The full case was provided to the respondents.

"I've been looking at the grade reports from first term," principal George Larson began, addressing Fred Morton, Bill Pillsbury, and Dana Oliver assembled in his office, "and it's clear that grades in your arts courses are highly inflated, compared with the rest of the school. Each of you is giving A or B to more than 85 percent of your students. That is simply going to have to change."

The three teachers stared at George in stunned silence. George went on. "I'm very concerned that some kids may be taking arts courses simply to get an easy A or B in order to raise their class ranking. It has long been the policy here to give the grades in arts courses equal weight with Group 1 academic courses as a way of demonstrating our belief in the importance of artistic pursuits. But we are being unfair to students who take a lot of math and science courses when they have to work so much harder to achieve the same class rank as those who take lots of arts courses."

Fred could no longer contain himself. "We've gone over this before, George. It's not right to compare what we do with math and science and history. We work with kids who often have never tried these things before — never risked being on a stage, never risked throwing a pot, or, in my case, never sung in a four-part harmony choir. Suddenly they come in and they're willing to try to learn to read music, to sing the harmony, to listen to the other kids' parts. You want me to give those kids C's? I'm sorry. I'm not going to do it."

"But Fred," George argued, "if that kid who gets an A or B from you is really a C student, and his class rank is artificially inflated, can't you see how that might affect his ability to perform well later in college?"

"We in the arts," Fred replied heatedly, "are teaching something that these kids need to know. If that kid has done really well in the arts courses, and okay in English and math and so on, he's probably a pretty good risk for college, and in fact might be a hell of a lot more interesting human being when he grows up. This bothers me, that maybe all this concern over grading is about the grade-point averages. If that's the reason, then our educational philosophy is really off the mark."

"I agree," said Dana. "What I'm trying to foster, particularly in a course like Voice, Movement, and Improvisation, is courage, risktaking, a willingness to drop all the crap and take the plunge. I'm trying to bolster self-confidence. Suddenly, a kid comes offstage and I say, 'Good job — C.' That's a mixed message."

> "Maybe we need to have a schoolwide policy about what grades mean. But we don't need to tell the arts to grade harder."

George turned to the young art teacher. "What do you say, Bill?" "I don't know," Bill answered slowly. "I could be a little tougher on the kids, I guess, but I don't like the idea. I grade on the basis of individual progress. If I see a kid has gotten somewhere during the semester, if there is a little bit of growth — I reward that. I'd say 95 percent of my kids are trying hard, doing the best they can. To me, a C is a negative reinforcement. It says, 'You're not that good.' And that kid isn't going to try."

"It sounds like you're trying to get us to grade the product," said Dana, "but the arts don't work that way. We're encouraging process. What's the point of education, anyway? Is it to make sure the kids 'get it right'? Or is it to motivate kids to try?"

"In most math and science classes," said Bill, "the kids are all at the same grade and ability level. They're all pigeonholed. In my classes, I have kids from grades nine to twelve. Some have learning disabilities. Some are at the top of their class. I have such a wide spectrum of kids that I can't say, 'This is what I expect of you — this is how much you have to get done this semester to get an A.' I can't say, 'Okay, you are the best in my class. You are an A student, you are talented. And you are a D student, you are not talented.' If the person is not talented, it's not their fault. Why should I slap them in the face with a D?"

"I'm willing to acknowledge, George," said Dana, "that there may be some problem, some kind of screwball message that we're sending kids because different departments have different ideas of what A's and B's mean. Maybe we need to have a schoolwide policy about what grades mean. But we don't need to tell the arts to grade harder."

CASE STUDY RESPONSES

Joan K. Foster, Dean
Letters, Arts and Sciences
Metropolitan State College of Denver

Not only may the educational philosophy at Lake Wobegon High "be off the mark" as the band director says, the faculty and administration are 20 years behind in their approach to the assessment of learning. They seem quite unaware of the recent advances in arts education and assessment techniques such as portfolios to evaluate student progress. In short, this faculty must become current in arts assessment. No educator worth any amount of salt regards arts classes as places where students merely "express" themselves and are graded for effort and attitude alone.

Lake Wobegon High School encloses an educational vacuum. A focus on grades rather than on learning fills the space inquiry should fill. Faculty and administration operate out of astounding assumptions: that arts are not academic subjects; that a grade can and perhaps should mean the same across disci-

plines; that students in math/science work harder than students in the arts; that art courses are easy; that some students are "really a C"; that science/math students are not taking risks.

George Larson, the principal, apparently lives comfortably with a contradiction: arts courses are less rigorous than science courses, but the grades in arts courses should carry equal weight with Group 1 academic courses to demonstrate the belief in the importance of "artistic pursuits." But a low percentage of A's and B's tells us nothing.

We don't know what the math/science faculty are thinking. Are they self-satisfied giving fewer A's and B's? Probably not.

We don't know what the math/science faculty are thinking. Are they self-satisfied giving fewer A's and B's? Probably not. Where grades rule, no one is happy, I imagine, probably including the students.

Principal Larson tells the band director that giving someone who "is really a C student" a higher grade inflates class rank "artificially" and "might affect [the student's] ability to perform well later in college." This emphasis on the power of grades and his labelling of students are astonishingly backward — as is his logic.

The conundrum of grades will dissolve as faculty and administration together address the issues of what students should learn and what skills can be developed independent of "talent." Fred mentions three skills, for example: reading music, singing harmony, and listening to others' parts. The others talk generally about attitudes like risk-taking, but do not consider how learning can be structured to form attitudes.

No one mentions that music is mathematical and linear, or that science can help students understand ceramics, painting and sculpture. Instead, they label students, talking of those who are "pigeonholed" in science and math. All the while, they could be exploring ways of assessing achievement, and structuring courses to support a coherent educational philosophy.

Principal Larson needs to encourage a focus on updating the curriculum. Together, he and his teachers should be asking: What are the goals of the courses? What knowledge and skills must be learned? And, vital to this situation, how can learning be assessed?

If the dialog continues, the faculty will recognize the similarities among disciplines. If they put their heads together, they will all see that hard work and dedication are just as necessary in the arts as they are in other disciplines, and that talents may be discovered and developed in all courses. Students learn about "process" in the arts just as they can learn a "process" in math and science. Working together, faculty will probably identify critical thinking skills which cross disciplines. They may even discuss sequences of courses — there are beginning, intermediate, and advances levels in the arts, just as there are in algebra.

The assessment movement demonstrates that disciplines can measure student progress and achievement. Current assessment methods suggest ways to do this. In the arts, for example, teacher and students can decide on criteria to critique art work, or what they should hear in a musical performance. Art educators have now developed excellent methods for constructing objective examinations covering history of art forms. All these are available in the literature.

Lake Wobegon High faculty must review their curriculum, decide what students can and should learn, and design methods to assess that learning. At the same time, they should recognize the relationships between disciplines and the common skills and knowledge their graduates should demonstrate.

Over time, the faculty will clarify their goals, will wrestle with questions about how to deliver instruction to achieve them. I hope they will see the relationship between goals, content, classroom activities, assessment, grading (not just grades) and education. Dare we suggest interdisciplinary courses, even some team teaching? How about faculty discussing the relationship of classes and the coherence of the full curriculum? Working together, they will forge an educational philosophy.

As it stands, the emphasis is in the wrong place. The principal should spend his time shifting the emphasis and supporting faculty in efforts to become current, not fretting over tables of grade distributions and accusing the arts faculty of grade inflation.

When this shift in emphasis occurs, there will still be differences in grade distributions, but these will no longer be the focus of attention. Then, quality teaching and a coherent curriculum will have a chance, and with that chance comes a focus on learning, rather than grades.

Nick Doane
Professor of English
University of Wisconsin–Madison
former director of Freshman Composition

Some educators stress grading as a pedagogical tool for reinforcing desired learning behaviors and acknowledging progress, and some stress it as an accumulated account compiled for outside authorities. It's natural that the teachers in this case want to keep grading in their control for it is the currency their students accept, as powerful as money; it is just as natural that the principal, responsible for the whole shebang, should worry abstractly about how it all adds up and appears to the world. The conflict in the case study is a sign of a healthy give-and-take. I suppose the principal is right that the music teachers, who have run up a collective grade point of 3.67, need to look at their practices. By the same token, the other arts teachers are not out of line with the overall grading patterns in the school if we consider the continuum of the GPA's (Art 3.08, Business 3.00, Foreign Language 2.96, Theater 2.87, History 2.83, Science 2.62, Math 2.52 – school average 2.75).

Speaking as a university teacher who has occasion to grade freshman

writing "subjectively" and Old English language "objectively" and who feels solidarity with the arts teachers as they make what seem to me their self-evident arguments concerning process and motivation, I see a couple of other important issues here. The principal is an average decent sort of guy who figures he can hear when the band's out of tune and when the apple looks like a prune. He's annoyed — I think that that's the right word, since the case doesn't give him much well-argued motivation — by the apparent lack of correlation between product and grades. The grades are mostly excellent, the musicals and pots, so far as he is concerned, often are not. To him these are symptoms of soft teaching and learning in these soft subjects as well as soft grading. The deviation he perceives in the arts classes away from a standard that ought to be established by the hard subjects is thus not just an untidiness or "inequity" but a threat to the integrity of the system at exactly the point where he should be exerting quality control.

Since he judges these art products by his casual ear and eye, he is doubtless judging the young musicians and artists against public standards of performance including what he has heard on records and in concerts and seen in books and museums. But he doesn't judge the products of the young mathematicians and physicists directly, with his own eye, or against similar high standards. For one thing, most of the products, standardized answers produced in a learning grid, are radically different from those of professional science work. A senior physics exam is not real physics the way a badly-played student rendition of a Sousa march is still a Sousa march. Compared to even the meanest papier-mâché ashtray, which must be judged by a complex individualized array of responses and which has a certain crude authenticity, the products prompted by institutionally constructed exercises that provide the grist for most of the grading in math and science have virtually no autonomy as products. (This is not to say that there are not worthy independent creative science projects in high school, but I suspect that science teachers judge these about as subjectively as the arts teachers judge their students' projects.)

In the end, the deviation in grades between the "softs" and "hards" is more apparent than real, and not just statistically. In all the areas, math, science, English, music, art, the students are being judged principally on mastery of certain behaviors according to the elaborated codes that prevail in each. In all areas students are being asked to perform, and these performances are being evaluated in terms expressed as grades; in some of these subjects individual results can be reduced to numeric patterns — can be tested "objectively." In others this is impossible or irrelevant or counter-productive. But in all subjects, performances are being judged against a pre-existing set of standard patterns, i.e., what is being taught and learned.

Most students have been doing art, dance, mime, theater, music, and writing since preschool and the patterns of behavior have long since been established and assimilated. What is going on in high school is further elaboration and refinement, often at quite sophisticated levels. But though things called math and science have also been taught from the beginning, they have for the most part been varieties of counting and narrative. The conceptual leaps required in high school are of a different order and the internal and external behaviors appropriate to productive work using this new kind of conceptualizing are just beginning to touch most students. The wonder is that the grades in math and science are as high as they are. Overall, most kids are probably being graded pretty consistently on actual performance and effort in all the subjects. More of them perform better in the arts because of their learning histories.

Michael David Brown

Students As Reviewers Of Faculty Case Studies

John Furlong
Program Director and Associate Professor of Freshman Studies
Transylvania University

At about the same time James Rhem asked me to comment on a case study (*NTLF*, Vol. 2, No. 1), I was ruminating over how to invite my students to think critically about their own educations. The two problems met each other along some neural pathway, hit it off, and offered to collaborate. So I decided to see what my students thought about the case study I was to comment on. Broaching the idea to James, I found encouragement. He was even kind enough to offer some space in the *FORUM* to talk about the experiment if it proved fruitful. It did. Here goes.

First, some background: Transylvania University, where I teach, is a small, liberal arts college in Kentucky with a regional reputation for excellence. The typical student is white, upper middle-class and comes fairly well-prepared (the average SAT score is 1160). Women now outnumber men by a small margin. I direct a program we call "Freshman Studies," intensive reading, discussion, and writing courses that every first year student must take. The two course series is writing intensive — our substitute for the traditional English Comp courses — but its main aim is to initiate students into different ways of thinking about various issues that liberally educated persons should be versed in. The class size is 20 students.

About three weeks into the first semester, we move from considerations of the effects of students' communities on their intellectual and social growth to the effects of their own formal education. Excerpts from Richard Rodriguez's *Hunger of Memory*, Bernice Sandler and Ellen Hoffman's "Chilly Climate in the Classroom," and the critique of "banking" from Paulo Priere's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* stimulate discussion and writing. I settled on this stage of the course as

my site for discussing the case study about a professor and his teaching.

After our conversation about "chilly climates," I thought the "Phil Aikman" case study would fit perfectly. Sandler and Hoffman described professorial attitudes and tactics that tended to silence women in the university classrooms: Phil Aikman silences Wendy. Hence, I determined that "Phil Aikman" would not interrupt the flow of the course. Indeed, the case in question had the advantage of specificity and detail, creating a *tableau vivant* of the theoretical, ethical, and pedagogical issues we had been discussing. I had hoped, then, to avoid

Students commiserated, but they seemed most engaged with the complexities of real, live human beings taking on the superhuman task of teaching responsibly. In short, I got the best "discussion" of the semester. Why?

tangents and to exhaust, more or less, one specific example.

The day after our discussion of "Chilly Climate," I distributed a copy of the "Phil Aikman" case study in both sections of my Freshman Studies classes. I directed students to read the study and record their reactions on paper. These "impromptu" writings were then shared and commented on by students in groups, and we spent the last 20 minutes of class in general discussion. Three features of this exercise surprised me. I'll mention two here and save the third for later. First, the **quantity** of student impromptu writing was almost twice that of their regular output; second, **the general discussion went painfully, and atypically, slowly**. After pondering this state of affairs, I've concluded that while students had a lot to say about the case, they were uncomfortable saying it in front of me, a professor, although — you'll have to trust me on this — I'm a teddy bear in class.

In the written records, I find suppressed urgency. Very cautiously, students try to make the best case for an abusive professor. (A few snippets: "Maybe this confrontation was just a clash of personalities"; "There are always two sides to an argument"; "the professor may have just been trying to generate interest"; "Wendy antagonized Aikman.") Then, at about paragraph two, their pens take wing, and they begin to struggle with the issues that professors confront. One student remarks, "Since Phil was a professional teacher, he should adjust his teaching to everyone in his class." A fellow student commented on how very difficult that would be to do. "Responding with impatience and anger is something a teacher should never do." "Never?" asks a fellow student. "I don't see how any professor could have maintained a respectable reputation with these inclinations," argues one student. His respondent doubts that we have evidence to impute an "inclination."

Such comments lead me to the third feature that struck me: **the degree of fairmindedness and careful consideration** given to this example – at least in student writing. In written conversations among themselves, students offered examples of ways they have been abused. And they commiserated, but they seemed most engaged with the complexities of real, live human beings taking on the superhuman task of teaching responsibly. In short, I got the best "discussion" of the semester. Why? I asked that question of several students after the semester when Freshman Studies has usually long floated down memory lane. One recalled that the case study "was a situation you could put yourself into. You could imagine it happening to somebody because of all the details. It was easy to get into the story." From another, "We were in the first term of our first year in college. I wouldn't have known that something like that could have happened to me, wouldn't have known what to look for. I feel I can handle situations like that now. At least I won't feel alone."

Michael David Brown

It is always a leap from one successful class to the advocacy of a practice, and I do not intend to make it on the basis of one trial in one class. However, I feel I've found enough of a vein to continue seeking ways of coaxing students to think about pedagogical issues by using case studies. One might object that the case study idea fits rather naturally into a course like Freshman Studies but would look quite odd in more traditional courses. I'm not suggesting its use in all courses. Think in terms of "curriculum" rather than discrete "courses." Most college curricula have something like our Freshman Studies these days. Or perhaps one might want to use case studies in Orientation courses. Moreover, I don't think the classroom is the only promising venue for student considerations of good teaching. As I'm sure most campuses do, we have weekly "open periods": I've mentioned to the dean the idea of having interested students and faculty come together to discuss a case study on teaching. Fraternities and sororities often sponsor information sessions for their acolytes — why not meet to discuss a classroom scenario?

I have made one assumption at least in my brief description — that good teaching, its standards and its complexities should be discussed among students as well as among faculty, and, ideally, they should discuss it together. I lift neither hand to defend this assumption, since its merit seems self-evident to me. If you accept it, if you share it, perhaps my experience with one class will give you the warrant to take your favorite case study into the classroom or curriculum. I have no doubt James Rhem would be glad to hear from you.

Teaching Assistants: The Issues, the Programs, and the Resources

Compiled by Judi Conrad, Associate Director, ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education

Today's teaching assistants are tomorrow's faculty. How and to what degree they receive training in how to teach will inevitably affect tomorrow's students. The growing body of literature surrounding the teaching assistantship falls roughly into two categories: 1) material dealing with general issues surrounding teaching assistants (i.e., programmatic concerns, specific training models, strategies and resources, socialization concerns, program descriptions, and research); and 2) material dealing with the specialized and politically sensitive concerns of International Teaching Assistants (ITAs).

A search of the ERIC database yielded representative publications from virtually every academic area, including psychology, sociology, anthropology, math, foreign languages, and even forensics and physical education. Clearly the disciplines are thinking and writing about how they train and nurture their teaching assistants. However, nearly half of the citations in our search dealt with ITAs. Given the importance of building teaching competence in the 20th century, the increasing interest in this area bodes well for the future. The following citations exemplify the current problems and solutions being addressed throughout the country.

TEACHING ASSISTANTS: The General Picture

"Colleges Expand Efforts to Help Teaching Assistants Learn to Teach." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, V38, N26, pA17-18, Mar 4, 1992. EJ Number: 441 608.

The Chronicle reports that the pressure to improve undergraduate instruction and prepare a new generation of faculty is forcing colleges and universities to strengthen their teaching assistant training programs and extend them well beyond the traditional one-day orientation, and make participation a requirement. This article also suggests that centralized programs that supplement departmental training appear to be the most effective.

"Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) Training: The View from the Top." Buerkel-Rothfuss, Nancy L.; Gray, Pamela L. Nov 1989. ED Number: 318 351.

"Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) Training: The View from the Trenches." Gray, Pamela L.; Buerkel-Rothfuss, Nancy L. Nov 1989. ED Number: 318 350.

These two studies afford insight into the complex business of assessing relative strengths and weaknesses when the respondents have a vested interest in presenting positive outcomes. The 164 graduate school deans and 470 graduate school department heads who responded to a questionnaire asking about the depth and breadth of their TA training programs responded that they were committed to the value of and satisfied with the effectiveness of GTA training and teaching despite the fact that there appeared to be a lack of rigorous training and teaching evaluation programs. On the other hand, responses from 207 GTAs who had taught for a semester or longer and 322 who had not yet taught at all suggested that only about half of the GTAs and returning GTAs had received or would receive any training for their assistantships. GTAs who had some experience teaching generally were satisfied with their assistantship responsibilities, felt that their department's preparation of GTAs was much better than other departments, and rated themselves highly as teachers.

(Cf. *The National Teaching and Learning Forum*, Vol. 1, No. 1 for more on these studies and a profile survey of current TA handbooks.)

National TA Conference

Perhaps in the evolution of our awareness of the importance of teaching assistants and our increasing concern with their training, we can look back to the uproar over the spoken English of non-native teaching assistants which erupted in the 1980s as a blessing. Since then much that was already being done to foster TA training has been more fully recognized and much that wasn't being done found an occasion to begin.

Few national initiatives have been so helpful as the biennial national conference on TA concerns established in 1986. The American Association for Higher Education, Council of Graduate Schools, National Association for Foreign Student Affairs, and the National Association of Graduate Students have provided the impetus for this event, while responsibility for organizing and hosting the meeting has been assumed by campuses interested in promoting TA training and related issues: Ohio State University in 1986, the University of Washington in 1989, and the University of Texas at Austin in 1991.

The contact person for the November 10-13, 1993 meeting to be held in Chicago is:
Marne G. Helgesem
Office of Instructional Resources
University of Illinois at Urbana
307 Engineering Hall
1308 West Green Street
Urbana, IL 61801
PH: (217) 333-3370

April 5 is the deadline for program submissions.

"Teaching Assistance, Not Teaching Assistants." Dunn, Richard J. *ADE Bulletin*, N97, p47-50, Win 1990. EJ Number: 422 692.

This article is indicative of the call for educational change felt throughout the academy. Dunn argues that when college faculty assist their teaching assistants, they are positively affected, becoming more self-conscious, collegial, and even collaborative.

Training Strategies, Tools, and Resources

"Preparing the Professoriate of Tommorrow to Teach: Selected Readings in TA Training." Nyquist, Jody D., Ed.; And Others. 1991. ED Number: 332 635.

The 56 papers in this volume address issues central to the preparation of graduate teaching assistants. Noting that for a majority of TA programs, infrequent workshops with either limited or no follow-up were the norm, Section I encourages the reader to consider the TA position in the context in which the TA operates. Section II focuses on the diversity of the current higher education student population. Ways of approaching TA training, both campus-wide and discipline-specific, are addressed in Section III. Section IV focuses on some of the appropriate strategies, tools, and resources that will prepare TAs to interact effectively with undergraduates. Section V deals with TA supervision issues and relationships. Section VI covers some of the special needs of international teaching assistants as they attempt to teach in a second culture using a second language. Among the many topics covered are the following: a proactive training approach; a peer consultation program; TA training materials; and the TA role in the interactive classroom.

Specific Strategies

"TA Training Resources." Wright, Delivee L. *Teaching Assistant Training in the 1990s.* New Directions for Teaching and Learning, N39, p125-32, Fall 1989. EJ Number: 396 828.

"Classroom Research for Teaching Assistants." Angelo, Thomas A.; Cross, K. Patricia. *Teaching Assistant Training in the 1990s.* New Directions for Teaching and Learning, N39, p99-108, Fall 1989. EJ Number: 396 826.

"Helping TAs Use Active Learning Strategies." Hatch, Deborah H.; Farris, Christine R. *Teaching Assistant Training in the 1990s.* New Directions for Teaching and Learning, N39, p89-97, Fall 1989. EJ Number: 396 825.

These three articles discuss specific strategies that appear to work well for TAs and are supported by other resources in the ERIC database that suggest interaction between teacher and student and among peers is paramount to students' engaging and investing in the learning process. The literature review by Wright presents resources useful to teacher assistant training programs, including print materials, videotapes, and program development guides. The article on classroom research by Angelo and Cross explores the use of classroom research as a method for training TAs, suggesting that classroom data should help TAs assess their teaching effectiveness. Hatch and Farris discuss examples of active learning strategies (writing tasks, speaking activities, small group activities, case studies, simulations, role-playing, field studies and small-group discussions).

Experimental Programs
Socialization of the TA

"Changes In Teaching Assistant Concerns Over Time." Ronkowski, Shirley. November 1989. ED Number: 315 012.

NEW !

An Important Guidebook

Preparing Graduate Students to Teach: A Guide to Programs That Improve Undergraduate Education and Develop Tomorrow's Faculty, edited by Leo M. Lambert and Stacy Lane Tice, 1993.

This highly informative volume draws on a national survey of teaching assistant training programs and practices sponsored by the American Association for Higher Education, the Council of Graduate Schools, and TIAA-CREFF. The deans of the 393 member institutions of the CGS were queried regarding the total number of TAs on campus, the number of international TAs, the training mandate, and so on. Further surveys were then sent to individuals involved in centralized (campus-wide) and discipline-specific (departmental) TA training programs, asking for more detailed program data. Additionally, respondents submitted a 300-500 word abstract and a "ten minute essay" on future directions for TA training and existing barriers and constraints to improved practice.

Following a summary of results in Chapter I, Chapter II profiles 28 centralized programs with differing home bases within the university — a graduate school, a center for teaching excellence, or similar central university office. The chapter also describes 44 discipline-based programs in the biological sciences, chemistry, English and composition, foreign languages, mathematics, psychology, the social sciences, and speech communication. In Chapter IV Pat Hutchings looks at the next steps needed in preparing the professoriate, based on the ten minute essays submitted by survey respondents. This change-oriented publication concludes with directories organized by program type and discipline (over 360 entries with contact information on each of the survey respondents).

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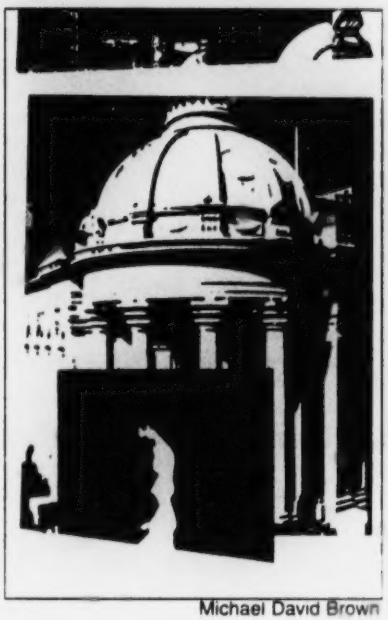

Michael David Brown

ITA Assessment Tools

"International Teaching Assistants Tests and Testing Policies at U.S. Universities." Johncock, Phil. *College and University*, V66, N3, p129-37, Spring 1991. EJ Number: 427 341.

A survey of 100 universities revealed test types, cut-off scores, and processes for testing language proficiency and performance of international teaching assistants. Results indicated the tests are complicated, time-consuming and politically sensitive. Issues emerging include department role, the use of an adjustment period before teaching, and the relationship of tests to training or task assignments.

"The Intelligibility of Three Nonnative English-Speaking Teaching Assistants: An Analysis of Student-Reported Breakdowns." Gallego, Juan Carlos. *Issues in Applied Linguistics*, V1, N2, p219-37, Dec 1990. EJ Number: 439 706.

A method for examining intelligibility is studied that involves recording undergraduates' immediate feedback on communication breakdowns, and then analyzing those breakdowns with English as a Second Language specialists. Pronunciation was found to be the major cause of unintelligibility.

This study examines the teaching concerns of 145 TAs and identifies changes in the ways they thought about teaching as they became more experienced. The survey instrument included background information and the F. R. Fuller open-ended question from the Teaching Concerns Statement (Fuller & Case, 1972; Fuller, Parsons & Watkins, 1974) encouraging expression of concerns about teaching. Nine categories of concerns were identified and grouped in three broad stages: (1) survival stage/adequacy concerns (e.g., What is expected of me?); (2) mastery stage/student learning concerns (e.g., How do I deal with student attitudes?); and (3) impact stage/improvement concerns (e.g., How can I foster critical thinking and learning for its own sake?). Results indicated stage one concerns were dominant among both first-time and experienced TAs. It was only among TAs with 10 or more quarters of TA experience that stage two concerns began to outnumber stage one concerns, and there was a notable lack of stage three concerns among all TAs surveyed.

"Turning Points Affecting the Socialization of Graduate Student Teachers." Kirk, Deborah L.; Todd-Mancillas, William R. Feb 1989. ED Number: 305 683.

Twenty-nine TAs at a medium-sized West Coast university were asked to identify salient experiences signaling and intensifying identification with their departments and their roles as fledgling academicians. The 172 "turning points" identified fell into three categories: turning points triggered by changes in intellectual self-evaluation; turning points associated with salient encounters with students, peers and superiors; and turning points associated with changes in organizational structure and climate. Appendices include the interview protocol, the graph on which levels of identification were plotted, and an outline of the turning points category system (59 references).

Administrators' Role

"The Development of TAs: Preparing for the Future while Enhancing the Present." Svinicki, Marilla D. *The Department Chairperson's Role in Enhancing College Teaching*. New Directions for Teaching and Learning, N37, p71-80, Spring 1989. EJ Number: 385 712.

Svinicki hosted the 1992 conference on TA Training and has long experience in working with TA training and faculty development. As her title suggests, she sees ways of enhancing the current teaching of both faculty and TAs by making use of the interactions between them. She emphasizes the responsibility departments have in helping TAs develop as teachers and gives attention to feedback systems and procedures that can help departments improve their supervision and development of their TAs as teachers.

INTERNATIONAL TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Assessment of Effectiveness

"Nonnative English-Speaking Teaching Assistants and Student Performance." Norris, Timothy. *Research in Higher Education*, V32, N4, p433-48, Aug 1991. EJ Number: 436 085.

A study at the University of Wisconsin-Madison examined the effect of nonnative English-speaking teaching assistants on student performance as measured by grades over five semesters. Additional variables investigated were TA regional origin, instructional area, course drop rates, and TA training programs. Consistently higher performance was found in nonnative TA-taught sections.

"Nonlanguage Factors Affecting Undergraduates' Judgments of Nonnative English-Speaking Teaching Assistants." Rubin, Donald L. *Research in Higher Education*, V33, N4, p511-31, Aug 1992. EJ Number: 448 823.

Three studies extend earlier research that showed the potency of nonlanguage factors such as ethnicity to affect undergraduates' reactions to nonnative TAs. Results suggested that intercultural sensitization for undergraduates should complement skills training for nonnative TAs.

"What Really Affects Undergraduates' Evaluations of Nonnative Teaching Assistants' Teaching?" Dalle, Teresa S.; Inglis, Margaret J. March 1989. ED Number: 310 641.

In a study of the reliability of an English language proficiency test for nonnative TAs, 18 ITAs were administered the SPEAK test. Results were compared with student evaluations of the intelligibility of the ITAs classroom speech. Despite problems with the SPEAK test, the measure was considered a valuable primary screening device. However, several of the highest scoring TAs were not rated highly by their students, suggesting that other variables might affect student evaluations. A questionnaire designed to evaluate ITA communication style was given to students. The subconstruct "attentiveness" on the communicator style measure was the only variable showing a high degree of correlation with assessment of teacher performance. Videotapes of the ITAs in a mock teaching situation were used to examine further the attentiveness factor. The authors suggest their research indicates that teacher attentiveness can compensate for deficiency in English speech skills.

ITA Programs of Interest

"Evaluating ITA Preparation Programs: Intensive versus Concurrent." Williams, Jessica. [1990]. ED Number: 332 502.

A study evaluated the relative pedagogical and cost effectiveness of training programs for ITAs that are conducted before and within the academic year. Both program types were established at the University of Illinois during the academic year 1989-90, with similar content, the same number of contact hours, the same instructor, and similar students in terms of first language background (Chinese) and range of English language proficiency. Twelve students participated in the 2-week summer course, and 10 in the 10-week concurrent course. Data were gathered on students' pre- and post-test scores on a language test and on an instrument designed specifically to evaluate the teaching and language skills of ITAs. Departmental evaluations and follow-up observations were also obtained. Based on these results and on impressionistic information, the authors conclude that given limited resources, the best solution is to provide a concurrent course focusing on pedagogical effectiveness, including language and interaction skills as well as classroom culture and management.

"Discourse Marking and Elaboration and the Comprehensibility of Second Language Speakers." Williams, Jessica. 1990. ED Number: 335 940.

An examination of the planned and unplanned speech of 24 ITAs who were native speakers of Mandarin and Korean at the University of Illinois involved videotaping on two occasions two weeks apart, wherein the use of discourse markers was a major focus. First, subjects pre-selected a concept or specific problem anticipated in an introductory course and prepared a presentation on it. On the second occasion, the subjects selected a topic from a list of 10 choices and took three minutes to prepare a talk on it. For purposes of comparison, the responses of five native-English-speaking teaching assistants were examined. Discourse features examined in all instances included definition, example/illustration, restatement/rephrasing, identification/naming, introduction/new topics, and summary/review. The ITAs' planned discourse contained more elaborate marking and more of it than the unplanned discourse. Contrary to expectation, native speakers did not do more marking than ITAs. However, raters understood the native speakers more easily, suggesting native speakers have other ways of making discourse comprehensible.

NEW ! AN ITA OVERVIEW

Crossing Pedagogical Oceans: International Teaching Assistants in U.S. Undergraduate Education, by Rosslyn M. Smith, Patricia Byrd, Gayle L. Nelson, Ralph Pat Barret, and Janet C. Constantinides, 1993.

This ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report addresses both concerns and remedies for what has been labeled the "ITA problem." Among the more politically sensitive questions raised is why our research institutions employ so many ITAs and how that practice is perceived by both native graduate students and the undergraduate students they teach. One reason given is that fewer American students have enrolled in the sciences and engineering programs in recent years. The large number of ITAs with limited English language skills in these areas has caused complaints from native students, parents, and the national press. As of 1992, 18 states had either passed laws or implemented system-wide mandates for assessing the language skills of ITAs (some of these mandates also require training programs to help ITAs develop language and pedagogical skills). The report offers a comprehensive review of the various types of training programs that have been established for ITAs as well as the wide variety of assessment and testing programs that have been set up to address both real and imagined problems with the intelligibility of the English of nonnative speakers.

The author concludes that successful ITA training programs largely depend on the quality and quantity of administrative support, suggesting that administrators must develop clearly defined assessment and implementation policies, provide stable and adequate funding, and support scholarship that addresses ITA assessment and training issues.

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LETTERS

But You Should Have Read . . .

Dear Dr. Rhem,

I feel that I must note three issues arising from my reading of the November issue of the *FORUM* [Vol. 1, No. 6].

In your (p. 4) piece on "One Minute Papers" you note Cross & Angelo's description of the technique but you give no credit to its inventor, Bob Wilson. Cross & Angelo, however, do cite Wilson in their "Handbook" (p. 150). Wilson's contribution should have been noted in the *FORUM.*

The piece on "Learning-Centered Evaluation" has many good ideas and I agree with its emphasis, but it also has a major weakness in its reliance on all the old complaints about "standard methods of teaching evaluation" (p.8). No knowledgeable person in the evaluation and teaching improvement field would rely on a single source of information or on data from an invalid instrument, but at the same time, that person could make very valuable use of data from a good student ratings process if teaching improvement were the intended outcome. As shown in a recent work (Theall & Franklin, *Effective Practices for Improving Teaching,* New Directions in Teaching and Learning, No. 48, Jossey-Bass 1991), much can be learned from what Cerbin refers to as "standard methods." These methods do not "remain far removed from the pulse of learning" unless the user is unfamiliar with how to use them effectively.

In parallel to Cerbin's error is that of William Vitek in what he has to say about the "teaching art" (p.11). I don't know what prompted Vitek's

Michael David Brown

anger against the "well-paid experts [who] criss-cross the country with their bags of data and teaching tips." Sounds a bit like sour grapes. Or aren't there any philosophers who get paid for consulting? At least the experts have "bags of data" rather than unsubstantiated opinion. In any case, no credible person in the field would claim to have "the" answer to any and all teaching situations. We all recognize the complexity of both the art and the science of teaching and generalize only when appropriate to situations where sufficient precedent and research suggest a good likelihood for positive results. Even then, we acknowledge the dynamics of the teaching situation and attempt to adjust any general solution to meet the specific needs of the instructor and the students. I suggest that Vitek read Centra & Bonesteel's chapter "College teaching: an art or a science?" in Theall & Franklin's *Student ratings of instruction: issues for improving practice* (New Directions for Teaching and Learning, No. 43, Jossey-Bass 1990) for a more balanced view.

I enjoy the *FORUM* and will continue to subscribe, but I wish you were more careful about giving appropriate credit and that you presented views based more on established research than on personal and rather biased opinion.

Thank you for your attention.
Sincerely,

Michael Theall
Associate Professor and Director
Teaching & Learning Center
School of Education
University of Alabama at Birmingham

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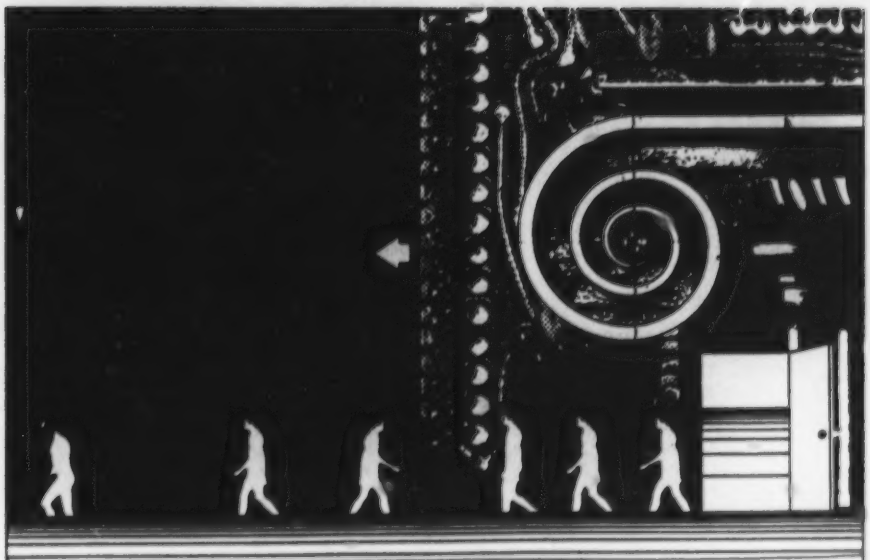

The Thinking Heart

DISCUSSIONS OF NEW APPROACHES TO teaching are often frustrating. Either they seem to advocate adding one more room to a house already sprawling over a broad field of responsibility or they seem to be describing an insular system, a new approach so holistic that it can't be understood without abandoning all of one's existing approaches. On the either/or see-saw the approach to teaching at Alverno College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, probably falls in the latter group. Its approach is integrated, holistic. Faculty there want you to see how one part of the approach supports and reinforces another. They want you to see how organic the approach is. But there's an inviting gentleness about Alverno's approach. They're willing to talk with you about the parts of their approach. Why? Because Alverno doesn't so much see itself as preparing its students for life, as it sees itself as helping them live more fully, right now and in the future. If that sounds like a distinction without much of a difference, it won't when you've heard Alverno faculty talk about the process of teaching and learning as they see it — especially when they talk about their supra-curriculum (the development of "competencies" or "abilities") and when they talk about how they teach "valuing" and "social interaction."

Owning Knowledge

Tim Riordan teaches philosophy at Alverno: "We ask students to talk about others' ideas and explain them, but not just to show they understand them. We ask them how [these ideas] make them feel, what their judgment is about the significance of the ideas, whether they would approach things the same way, do they identify with these things or not? People working from within other curricula might say that a lot of the exercises we do here are just asking students their opinion or how they feel about something. And to that we'd say, 'Well yeah, we are because ultimately that's what matters anyway. We're more interested in what happens to students as a result of studying these thinkers than that they just remember what they've studied.

"It's been a tradition that in higher education we somehow expect students to pull all this stuff together. But usually, we don't help them do it. We say that's not our job. But it is; it's part of our responsibility."

Performing Knowledge

If the ownership of knowledge doesn't mean remembering it at Alverno, what does it mean? Marcia Mentkowski, director of the Office of Research and Evaluation and a professor of psychology at the school would say it means "being able to 'perform' it." Successful performance — or pulling it all together in Riordan's words, and applying what they've learned — depends on having certain competencies. Alverno's dual curriculum (the "competencies" and

the disciplines), Mentkowski explains, tries to pull together into one construct many ideas about learning that have often been talked about separate from one another. Meta-cognitive strategies, critical thinking, cooperative learning, active learning and many similar ideas about learning come together at Alverno under the concept of "ability" development or the "competencies." In the mid 1970s Alverno settled on eight key abilities it felt its students needed to develop:

Communication
Analysis
Problem solving
Valuing in decision making
Social interaction
Taking responsibility for the environment
Involvement in the contemporary world
Aesthetic response.

Each of these competencies gained departmental status and the faculty as a whole set out to find ways to discover how to teach them and how to integrate that teaching across the disciplinary curriculum. Many of the abilities now seem familiar; others seem very reflective of the public discourse of the 1970s. But two seem to stand out from the others — valuing and social interaction. And as one looks at these two more closely, they begin to reveal what's really different about Alverno's approach to teaching. In a nutshell that difference seems to be a two-fold courage: the courage to believe college can still teach the whole person — mind and heart, and the courage to try.

In the last twenty years, the importance of small group discussion, individual projects, and a variety of other techniques Alverno has been a leader in using, have become familiar indeed. But what is less familiar and fundamentally exciting about the approach to teaching there is the way the teaching continually insists on a connection between knowledge and performance and on the understanding of performance as **informed and effective living**. And that, in turn, involves bringing the heart to bear, or as Riordan says, inquiring after the students' experience and judgment — and their feelings.

The Head in the Heart

"Traditionally in the liberal arts," says Mentkowski, "we have concentrated on the cognitive side because we have understood how to connect there. In relation to the affective side we've had a much more difficult time. As a psychologist I think it's fair to say that we understand very little about the affective side of the person and the development of empathy and values and maturity. We don't understand it very well."

And yet if we don't understand it very well, we've long known how important it is. Many studies have shown that in teaching, as in psychotherapy, the affective field established in the classroom has as great an impact on student learning as that of anything else. And so Alverno faculty take on this teaching challenge even as they work to understand more exactly how affect and cognition intertwine. (Many would argue that that's not much different from teaching in general, where it's never entirely clear why it works when it does or why it doesn't when it doesn't.)

Mentkowski sees a major point of connection between cognitive and affective development in cultivating the habit of **continuous self-assessment** in students. Stepping in and out of one's own thinking is a key skill in improving cognition. But in teaching the whole person, you can't stop there, Mentkowski says. "We need to teach [students] how to separate their **person** from their **performance**. When you perform badly, you don't say 'I am a terrible person.' . . . You're not only looking at emotional maturity, but you're looking at how affect develops in the student in the same way that their cognition develops and at how their affective — or maybe we should call them **meta-affective** — processes develop in the same way that meta-cognitive processes develop. You're looking at the way those interrelate, knowing that the affect could assist or hinder the development of both means of knowing."

In short, Alverno sees students as feeling beings as well as thinking ones. Further, it not only sees their feelings as vital to their learning, it believes it can, to some extent, tutor their hearts.

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No Woman Is an Island

That's where the development of valuing and social interaction abilities comes into play. Since the 1970s Bernadin Deutsch has headed the Social Interaction department and now chairs the division (which also includes the Problem Solving department). Deutsch talks a lot about feelings, empathy, and sensitivity to others, but she's also strong on **volition**. The goal of the Social Interaction department, she says, is to develop the ability in students "to be effective *at will*" in all kinds of social interactions. And that means self-awareness on at least two levels at once.

"Interaction always requires two focuses: There is the goal-directedness and there is the interpersonal dimension," says Deutsch. "When you are primarily goal-directed, you still

> Building intellectual independence through an insistence on social interdependence seems to work.

can never be without an awareness of how people are responding. What is your effect on people and theirs on you? You can't step aside from that, or no matter how clear you are about the goal, you run the risk of stepping on people, doing imprudent things, losing goodwill."

And that would make you "ineffective," and Alverno prides itself on graduating students who are effective. (See the accompanying story, p. 4.)

"Interaction is not just what's good for me," says Deutsch, "but what's good for those around me. So I may have a quick mind and tongue, but I may need to hold it sometimes. Our faith in interaction is that the best thought will come forward, and you will learn from each other. You will learn more from having been involved in interaction than you could have had you studied alone. Students are told before they enter that this is a focus at Alverno. You do not learn only for yourself. You learn so that you will be able to produce something with others. You do not live alone."

Enforcing social interaction creates far more independence than conformity. Tim Riordan, for example, recalls with pleasure how when, half-way through a semester illness kept him from meeting an early class, the students ignored his note saying they'd discuss the material next time. Instead they went to the audio-visual center, got some tape recorders, held the planned discussion based on their written answers to questions given out in the previous class meeting, and left the tapes in Riordan's mail drawer. "I want them to learn to converse with each other about these things without my assistance," says Riordan.

"Although our students do study the ideas of the so-called experts in the field, **what we consider more important is that the students see themselves as doing philosophy**, history and so on, not just as studying the experts in the field," says Riordan.

Building intellectual independence through an insistence on social interdependence seems to work. And in Riordan's opinion it develops more active intellectual involvement. "This semester my students read things on friendship by philosophers and others, but I was more interested in what they could do with those ideas, the kinds of thinking they could do about the subject. What matters is what they *do* with what they study.

"What happens when they begin reading the thinkers is that they discover that they're coming up with some of the same things that these people did. So they begin to see themselves as people who are doing philosophy or history. And that — ultimately — is the important thing. In their everyday lives they're going to have to make judgments about friendship and how they relate to their friends and what sort of responsibility friendship involves, so it's not just brainstorming out of ignorance — they're reading things — but they don't just look at something else [like a reading] and explain it. They explore the issues with the thinkers and with each other."

Thus in a very full sense, through valuing and social interaction, the students come to own their education — own it not as a possession, but as an extension, a discovered part of who they already are as human beings. "I think developmentally what happens is that students learn their connection with those heritages," says Riordan. "But at the same time, in learning to do it themselves [do philosophy, etc.], they also learn to challenge parts of those heritages. And this, I think, is where the real heart of multicultural education might be."

Riordan, Deutsch, and Mentkowski all agree that this approach, while standing free from a worship of received opinion, inculcates some values of its own. "Yes, there are certain values imbedded in this kind of pedagogy: **the value of listening to what others have to say, the value of intellectual humility, the value of making commitments in the face of ambiguity and complexity, the value of seeing complexity and considering the consequences of ideas**. You can see how all these things are imbedded in the process that we're using here."

The Alverno faculty feel comfortable teaching those values, especially since they are also characteristics traditionally associated with an active and vigorous mind. Riordan and his colleagues aren't afraid that in prodding students to think for themselves they'll come to conclusions that are out of step with the traditions of liberal learning. If anything they fear the opposite: Says Riordan, "A bigger problem is the growing number of fundamentalists of various kinds. People who already think they know what the truth is don't have any reason to ask questions." ■

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CLOSE UP

OUT IN THE WORLD

IT WOULD BE HARD TO FIND A CAMPUS where college-wide reforms in curriculum and instruction have been assessed as thoroughly as Alverno's. The college's Office of Research and Evaluation offers page after page listing the titles of careful research studies tracking the effect of Alverno's approach on its students' education — and their lives. Many of the titles sound cold, clinical, and distanced ("A Longitudinal Study of Student Change in Cognitive Development, Learning Styles, and Generic Abilities in an Outcome-Centered Liberal Arts Curriculum"), but surprising warmth lies under the ice.

In a forthcoming article in the *Journal of Metropolitan Universities* ("Connecting Education, Work, and Citizenship: How Assessment Can Help"), Marcia Mentkowski and Glen Rogers report on a series of 500 "behavioral event interviews" Alverno has conducted since 1978 both with its alumnae and other non-Alverno graduates acknowledged as highly effective in their fields. The interviews use a coded synthesis of criteria derived from two perspectives: The first describes highly effective professional performance as defined by the professions themselves; the second comes from Alverno's own definitions of effective performance in light of the complex ability sets at the heart of their curriculum. They've combed through the interviews looking for evidence of significant connections between the higher order abilities taught at Alverno and alumnae performance in life and work after college. They've found them. Indeed, they've found powerful connections, life and death connections.

The following is excerpted from Mentkowski and Rogers's forthcoming article:

> The work environment is a neonatal unit of a hospital. A premature baby is dying. The doctor and parents have made the decision to take this baby off the respirator. With the nurse in support, the doctor asks the parents if they want to hold the baby. The mother agrees. Aside, the doctor then tells our nurse, "We're going to take this baby off the respirator and you take it in and deal with the parents."
>
> The nurse comments to the interviewer:
>
> "The doctor was too upset. He couldn't come in there. He just kept asking me, 'How's it going? How's it going?' It's real difficult for doctors to let their babies die."
>
> The parents and the nurse take the child off the respirator and the nurse gives the baby to the mother to hold for the first time since the baby was born:
>
> "The dad stands back and you can see he's torn up inside. I said to him,

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> 'Do you want to hold her?' and he said, 'No, no, I don't want to hold her.' The mom says, 'Hold her, hold her,' and he won't do it. So I picked up the baby and I put the child in her dad's arms."
>
> Throughout this interview, the interviewer is skillfully asking the kind of questions that focus on what happened and what led up to it, what she actually *did*, who else was involved, what she was thinking, feeling, and intending at the time, and what was the result. The interviewer is gathering information about the combination of knowledge, motives, values, and skills that lead to this decision. The nurse describes using several sources of information that lead her to thrust the baby into the arms of the father. She has learned from medical research that:
>
> "Parents who know what the baby looks like and who hold the baby, have fewer ugly dreams. They're less likely to fantasize about the baby later and they feel less guilty about not having done enough for the baby."
>
> She has attended a course on death and dying. She also draws on prior conversations with more experienced nurses and recalls her observations that:
>
> "Many nurses will not take a baby that is dying because they can't handle it."
>
> She also uses her experience with adults who were dying:
>
> "I encourage family members to touch them because touch is very important, even if a person is dying. A lot of people don't like to do it in our society."
>
> We learn how her values relate to her decision to actively intervene:
>
> "I can handle it because I feel that God is taking care of these babies. We've done whatever we can and now it's His turn to take them. God takes care of us, you know. He puts us through a lot but we're probably stronger, more aware of our feelings, even though it's hard to say that sometimes in the beginning."
>
> What happens when she puts the baby into the father's arms?
>
> "He just about threw the baby back at me. I said, 'No, no, just hold her.' And he calmed down and he rationalized it all and he was very appreciative of what had happened. The baby died in both their arms. So it was very gratifying when the dad came back later and said, 'I really appreciate what you did for us and it was real important for me that I did that thing for my baby when she was dying.' "

The example speaks volumes about the integration of knowledge and life Alverno's approach to teaching and learning tries to foster. Knowing what to do, having the heart to do it and the skills to do it well defines effective performance. Further, Mentkowski and Rogers argue that analyzing an alumna's performance in light of the accountability such real-life situations impose helps improve teaching and assessment back on campus. After all, it can only make it easier for faculty to see the connections between their influence on students and students' behavior in such real-world situations. ■

Conference Report

The Power of the Unexpected

AAHE's Exemplary Teacher's Forum - 1993

I first heard about the blizzard of 1993 when the pilot congratulated us Friday night on being one of the last flights into Washington's National Airport. Weather hadn't been much on my mind. Back in Wisconsin, my focus had been on springtime, as though longing for it would help speed it along. As usual, I was over-estimating the power of longing and under-estimating the power of the unexpected.

In the hotel the TV was all warnings. Wind and sleet blew against the windows. By morning everything was white. Thunder joined the rain, and on TV live coverage of the weather ranged from a phone interview with a woman snowed in in the mountains to one with an older lady urging viewers to put out seed for the birds. I improvised boots by tying a couple of garbage bags over my shoes, and slogged over to the Hilton.

The conference theme, "Reinventing Community," had been popular. The American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) expected nearly 1,900 attendees at its annual meeting. When the weather hit, only a little over half that number made it. But the irony was inescapable: Adversity often engenders community. It may not sustain it. It may not be the best way to form it, but few things smother isolation and difference as quickly as an obvious, powerful, common adversity.

Even the weather seemed bent on provoking thoughts about community.

Here was community, of a sort anyway. But I think in the back of their minds a lot of people were wondering in a general, abstract way whether the camaraderie of pulling together against adversity could be maintained without the adversity? Do we always need something to oppose in order to pull together? The wondering went on, lingering as feelings of unease even in the midst of the strange pleasure of being stuck in the snow together.

Maybe that was it, I thought, the positive root of all communities: the happiness, the release, the inevitable coming together that occurs in the face of something clearly more powerful than yourself, certainly more powerful than your expectations, and probably more powerful than your longings.

• • •

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Parker Palmer's keynote address Sunday night, "Remembering the Heart of Higher Education," had been a beautiful speech. Delivered to half the number of attendees expected, in a ballroom cut down to less than half its full size, the speech's grand themes were no less effective than they might have been if delivered as envisioned — in a grand hall to nearly 2,000 people. They were warm themes, after all, themes of intimacy concerned with the passion, not the pomp of great ideas. Palmer even avoided the word "ideas," preferring instead to point to that common, yet wonderfully diverse, world of experience lying behind the love of knowledge: "the grace of great things," he called it. The "great things" behind quantum mechanics, novels, poetry, chemistry, effective management — all of it, everything we study. Not the canon of "great books" and ideas, but the incredible grace (in a religious sense) behind the canon. The things a canon is about.

The speech set the stage for a meeting of AAHE's Exemplary Teacher's Forum the next morning where Palmer spoke again. This time he expanded on his thinking about teaching. That thinking has centered on a search for a metaphor. And the metaphor that Palmer says has emerged for him is this: "To teach is to create a space in which the community of truth is practiced."

"To create a space" is more abstract than most metaphors tend to be. But that didn't stand in the way of a good discussion of teaching as a "relational" process. "I don't think there is any way to really know that is not relational," Palmer said.

Palmer's book *To Know As We Are Known* has enjoyed wide influence because of the eloquence with which it describes the sharp limits of the traditional "objectivist" conception of knowledge and teaching. For Palmer, knowledge is not objectivist. Teachers teach about "subjects" not "objects," and subjects can only be known in and through relationships with them. This view of knowledge and of teaching immediately suggests the importance of cross-relations and two-way streets. So, it was not surprising to hear Palmer say, "You don't really teach in community until you feel you really need the students."

We talked a lot about how "to create space" and we took time to look for our own metaphors for teaching. Indeed, the teachers gathered at the table I was sitting at decided to skip the next general session, bring back some lunch, and keep on exploring our own metaphors for teaching. I was glad for that. "To create a space . . ." didn't quite click for me, and that made me restless.

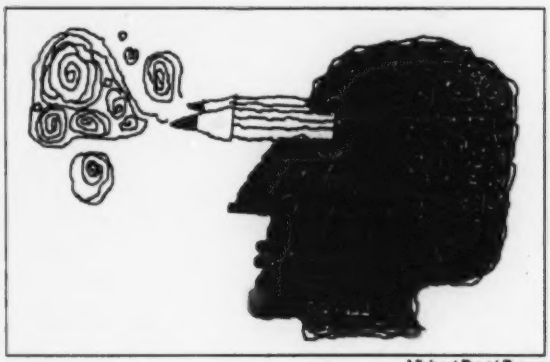
(*Continued page 6*)

Standing in line waiting to buy a sandwich, I kept turning the metaphor over in my mind. What was it that bothered me about it? Why didn't it speak to me? What did it mean? You could *fill* space and you could *clear* space, but you couldn't create space. Surely it meant more than clearing space even if it emphatically did not mean (in any objectivist sense) filling space. Teaching is many things, I thought, and it might even be that setting the chairs of student minds in a circle around a subject was a fundamental element, but there had to be more than setting up the conditions. Didn't there? How did this "community of truth" get started in its "practice"? Was setting the right conditions enough first to form a community, and then to get it going in this direction?

Perhaps "space" meant "freedom," unbuckling the straight-jacket of old, unquestioned habits of thought and encouraging some new learning. Maybe, but "space" — left me unsatisfied. Was I tiresomely objectivist in feeling that all the space and matter had already been created (by God or the Big Bang) and that teaching was a matter of inviting, guiding, and celebrating discovery and re-discovery? I didn't have a good substitute metaphor, but "space" still felt empty to me. A good metaphor ought to feel meatier than this.

• • •

The power of the unexpected took control of the discussion when we all got back to the table with our lunches. No one seemed ready to talk about metaphors directly. Instead, one woman became fascinated with how a man from California was taking notes. Instead of writing main points and subpoints in a traditional outline, he drew pictures and "concept maps" all over sheets of paper that he held in "landscape" rather than "portrait" fashion. He also used four colored pens, each having a different conceptual association for him. He explained his system, and several began to try it as we talked.



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Not surprisingly, we talked first about our note-taking styles and what they meant to us. Some wrote outlines, others clipped snippets of complete sentences and phrases, and still others merely collected key words and definitions. It wasn't long before we laughed at how we had backed into talking about metaphors without really realizing it, metaphors of how we represented knowledge to ourselves in our private orthographic systems.

What already seemed clear and what didn't need saying was that the group itself had become the metaphor we were seeking. In this discussion, no one listened politely while someone else took a turn at talking. Instead, we discovered the breadth of our capacity to engage and be interested in others. It was a self-moderating discussion, a conversation, and like a conversation it ranged from personal stories to bibliographic citations as members shared the riches of their experience and thinking about teaching wherever those experiences and thoughts had come from.

And just as I was about to say that the best teaching and learning experiences for me were almost always conversations, just as I was about to tell how the Kuder Preference Test I took in high school said I could be a dentist or a forest ranger or a psychiatrist and how I'd always related to the forest ranger best and thought teaching was like being a ranger sharing what he knew with campers and always learning new stuff because of the questions they asked and because he lived in the forest and the forest was always changing and you were always talking to new people — just as I was about to make that Faulknerian outburst, we did begin to dabble in some common metaphors. I say "dabble" because by then we seemed to have tacitly accepted the impossibility of finding one comprehensive metaphor that would do for everybody. And so almost with a little embarrassment we confessed how we were drawn to images of the circle or the spiral. One woman talked of the Sacred Hoop in Native American thinking; another spoke of "the quest."

And so it went. We didn't *not* come up with a single metaphor, nor can the real fruits of one of the best discussions I've ever sat in on be nailed down in words. It's not that what was said can't be described, not that the mystery of it isn't knowable and reproducible. But you had to be there. You had to be present in those moments. The truth(s) of it lay in the doing — just as they do in a good class meeting.

• • •

Perhaps that's the real value, the genius, of Parker Palmer's metaphor — that it's not really a metaphor: It's a challenge. It doesn't make immediate sense, as a metaphor usually does, by posing an analogy between the familiar qualities of one thing in order to shed a particular light on something else. Every part of his definition cries out for discussion. And at its best, the discussion becomes the thing in itself — more powerful than metaphor, or expectation, or anything that stands outside the process. ■

VIEWPOINT

Ten Fundamental Truths About Learning

William A. Reinsmith
Professor of English
Philadelphia College
of Pharmacy and Science

1. **Learning first takes place through *osmosis.*** Before anything else it is a process of unconscious immersion in one's immediate environment. Learning starts with the earliest ray of sensitivity to surroundings — probably in the womb. By the time children reach school, they have absorbed a tremendous amount. In fact, they have achieved the greatest feat of learning: essential mastery of a spoken language. Though schooling is more formal and conscious, as educators we should never forget that this osmotic process still goes on.

2. **Authentic learning comes through trial and error.** No trial and error, no experimentation, then no real learning. The learner needs to fool with things, to try them on, to adjust and readjust. This is true whether dealing with concrete skills or with conceptualizing. The "fit" will come eventually since our minds are by nature meaning-oriented. Teachers on every level need to create environments that allow for this trial and error process. Otherwise learning, at best, will consist of memory and recall.

3. **Students will learn only what they have some proclivity for or interest in.** Find out what a person likes, then help him build around it. Once interest exists learning is possible, and teaching kicks in. We waste enormous quantities of time (and money) giving students learning tasks for which they have no interest or readiness, boring them and frustrating ourselves in the process.

4. **No one will formally learn something unless she *believes* she can learn it.** A large part of preliminary teaching has to do with helping learners come to believe they can learn through a process of affirmation and reaffirmation. But the teacher can't do it all. Students should also be gently urged to look inside themselves where the real teacher and affirmer lives. Once students genuinely believe they can learn something, the teacher need only create learning opportunities (a huge task in itself). Students with both curiosity and belief will be self-propelled. Let them learn. Stay out of the way. As Heidegger said: "To be a teacher is, above all, to let others learn."

5. **Learning cannot take place outside an appropriate context.** No one learns in a vacuum. Isolated learning does not exist. All learning is part of a universe of discourse, an interlocking network of connections. An appropriate context taps the learner into those connections. Quite often — perhaps far more often than we can afford to admit — the classroom is an inappropriate context for genuine learning. At the very least, we should try to make our classrooms vibrate like a crossroads where powerful ideas intersect. Education, as Michael Oakescott has observed, has more to do with conversation than with isolated bodies of information or fact. To converse is to connect and immerse oneself in an on-going flow. Only appropriate contexts allow such immersion to occur.

> "Just see what a tiresome dispute you are introducing. You argue that a man cannot inquire either about that which he knows or about that which he does not know; for if he knows, he has no need to inquire, and if not, he cannot; for he does not know the very subject about which he is to inquire." — *Socrates*

6. **Real learning connotes *use.*** If something isn't going to be immediately used or applied it won't get learned. Initial learnings will abort and be erased unless extended and reinforced in some practical way. At the very least, the conditions in which learning can be used should be simulated. (Colleges attempt to do this in science course labs.) Knowing and action work in tandem. Telling students they will use or need something later on, even though it has no immediate value, is a waste of time. It will not be learned — which is why professors in subsequent courses, a year or two down the road, find they need to "reteach" what they assumed their students already knew. Students haven't forgotten the material; they simply never learned it because no follow-through took place. Taking this truth seriously would very likely entail the abandonment of most college curricula as they presently stand.

Observations or insights taken in and temporarily forgotten (perhaps not even fully understood), may be remembered later on when life experience makes them relevant, but skill learning does not work this way.

7. **No one knows how a learner moves from imitation to intrinsic ownership, from external modeling to internalization and competence.** But it happens and it's the one process no one can teach. A teacher can only try to assist it by setting up the conditions for it and trying to act as a catalyst. But the actual crossover is mysterious. So too, in a larger sense, it is difficult to understand how one moves successfully between the known and the unknown. In strictly logical terms it should be impossible. Socrates defined the problem in responding to Meno:

"I know, Meno, what you mean, but just see what a tiresome dispute you are introducing. You argue that a man cannot inquire either about that which he knows or about that which he does not know; for if he knows, he has no need to inquire, and if not, he cannot; for he does not know the very subject about which he is to inquire."

Yet students do move into the unknown and come to know. This

process is at the very core of learning. To date, we know very little about how it works. Thus, what is really important in learning can't be taught.

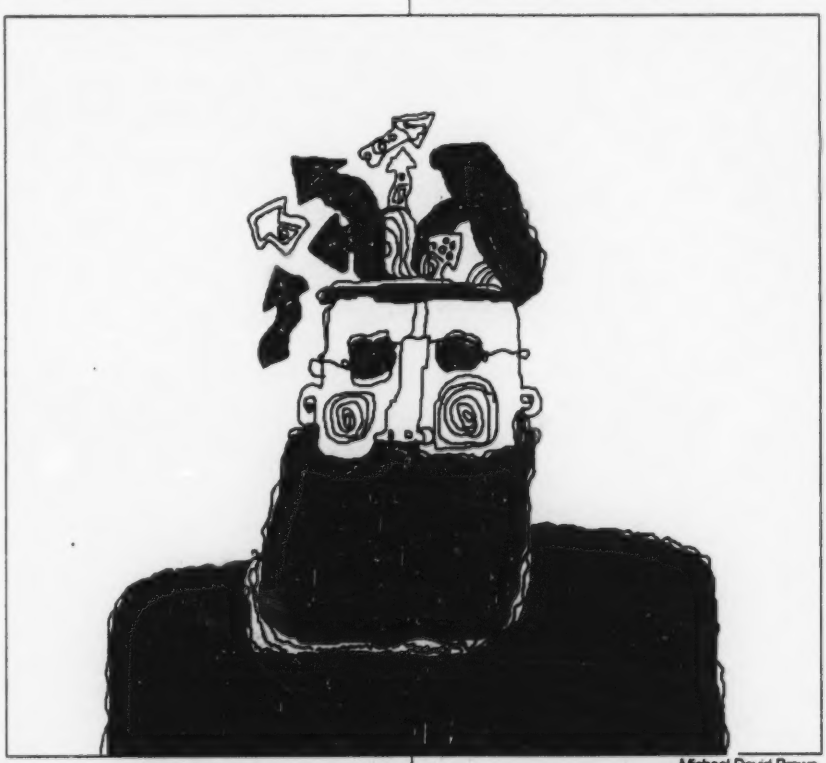
8. **The more learning is like play, the more absorbing it will be** — unless the student has been so corrupted by institutional education that only dull serious work is equated with learning. In this case, the introduction of playfulness will appear as fun, but not connected with true learning. It is frightening how hard a teacher must work to convince today's college students that study and learning can be interesting — even joyful — activities. More often than not, students greet that idea with incomprehension or at best with mild fascination.

9. **For authentic learning to happen, time should occasionally be wasted, tangents pursued, side-shoots followed up.** Some of the greatest discoveries have been made through serendipity. So, too, learning moments are occasionally stumbled upon inadvertently. A teacher should feast on these, follow their flow, be humble before them. It often happens that what really gets learned is different from what the teacher had in mind — an experience both baffling and intriguing. But little can be done about it except to teach for surprise. Teachers who structure too tightly where they think the learner's mind should go may be involved in conditioning, rather than learning.

10. **Tests are a very poor indicator of whether an individual has really learned something.** The main reason for this is that, except for disciplines which are extremely abstract and theoretical, tests provide an artificial context for demonstrating one's knowledge. They seldom address the real world. By the same token, wrong or misguided answers are far more revealing than correct ones. A teacher who follows up *why* a student answered the way she did may learn something valuable about that student's mind, as well as the context in which that mind functions.

All of these interconnected truths are general enough to apply to learning of any kind. They are so basic and obvious that one may wonder why they need to be stated at all. Our greatest educators have espoused them in some manner during the course of Western history. Yet it is the simple and obvious that we tend to overlook when discussing or recommending educational change. We often engage in educational activity as if these truths didn't exist — and then wonder why we fail to engender learning in our students. In any profession ignorance of its elemental laws will lead to shoddy, even disastrous, results. Perhaps a large part of the reason we educate so poorly is that we fail to observe and work within the fundamental principles of our craft, so we don't create environments in which they can be applied. Successful teaching can ensue only where the fundamental truths of learning are both observed and respected. Periodically, teachers on all levels need to return to those basic truths — however mysterious they may be — and reflect on them at length. ■

William Reinsmith is the author of Archetypal Forms in Teaching: A Continuum *(Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1992).*



Michael David Brown

Submitting Manuscripts

Readers continue to send us a variety of interesting manuscripts on teaching and learning. We welcome them and invite you to send us your thoughts. Articles may address any aspect of the topic(s), and may be discipline-specific or general in nature. However, it's important to keep a diverse readership in mind, since faculty from all disciplines and in all 50 states (plus a growing number of foreign countries) now read *The National Teaching and Learning Forum.*

Submissions may not exceed 1500 words (six ordinary typed pages) except in extremely unusual circumstances, and submissions should be shorter whenever possible.

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PROGRAMS

Peers and Teaching

Many believe the best way to improve teaching is to encourage teachers to talk about it, but historically such conversations haven't been encouraged. Faculty often feel resistant. Sometimes they admit they don't know how to talk about their teaching, and often they're suspicious of having it observed. How, then, do you get the kind of conversations about teaching started that side-step these obstacles and prove truly worthwhile?

Here are profiles of three programs — from the East coast, West coast and Midwest — each different in its approach, yet highly successful.

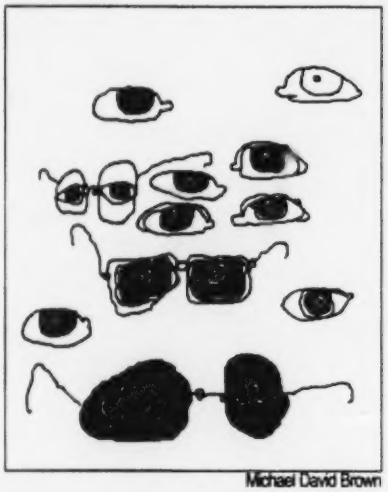
'Featured Faculty' Theater

The newest and most unusual of the three programs began last year at Eastern Michigan University. Deborah DeZure, co-director of the campus' Faculty Center for Instructional Excellence, says the objective of the "Featured Faculty Series" is to "open the classroom door." Indeed, she sees the current program more as a catalyst for cultural change than an institution in itself. "I'd like to put myself out of business," she says. "I'd like to make [being observed] so comfortable and so normal that everybody would open their classrooms to colleagues."

At the moment, however, DeZure selects outstanding teachers from a variety of disciplines on the basis of student evaluations and recommendations from their deans, and asks if they'd be willing to be observed by a group of other faculty. She's had no trouble finding volunteers. Last semester, she was running two or three observations a week. "The interest was already there," she says, "the program just created a structure that removed some barriers so faculty could do what they already wanted to do."

The Observing Groups

Normally, 10 to 15 faculty — usually from a wide range of disciplines — sign up to observe. Ahead of time, DeZure sends them a short memo reminding them of when and where the class will be and what its size and format (lecture, discussion, lab, etc.) are. She also includes special instructions from the featured teacher. Some require observers to participate in the class; others would rather they didn't. DeZure also includes a copy of Harry Murray's "Teacher Behaviors Inventory" which they may use if they like as an aid in noting specifics. Later on, the observers, the faculty member, and DeZure meet to discuss the class.



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The discussions form the heart of the program. "They're often very intense, personal experiences," says DeZure. "People become very reflective. Transformations occur in the discussions as people begin to connect the event — the class, the issues that come up about it — to their own teaching, their lives, their progress." The tone of the discussions is never judgmental, she says. For the most part it stays focused on the teaching issues the class seems to raise.

DeZure does give featured faculty members the chance to ask for more critical feedback if they want it. So far only one out of about 20 participants has. But, DeZure says, that's because these are outstanding faculty whose teaching generates so much positive discussion, there's not much to criticize.

The Faculty Observed

When DeZure conceived the program, she saw it as primarily for the observers' benefit, but the most profound impact, she says, seems to be on the faculty member who gets observed. "They already know they're good, but they become much more reflective, more analytical about their teaching." One featured faculty member wrote: "I'm convinced that I was the primary beneficiary. For weeks before the observation, I kept asking myself what it is that I do to promote learning. I kept searching for what it is that really works for my students. I never pursued the issue with that level of interest or depth before. I even went around asking students and colleagues of mine what it is that I do that works." DeZure continues to find volunteers easily and twenty-five percent of the observers come back for additional sessions, indicating the program is working well at least for some faculty.

DeZure would like to see the program move into a second phase that brings issues of pedagogy and content closer together. She'd like to see the departments take over setting up observations, and have the program become less centralized. "The present arrangement tends necessarily to focus on pedagogy," she says. "But if faculty could observe peers in their own departments, they'd at least have the possibility of discussing pedagogy and content together."

Peer Coaching: The Dance of the Dyads

The six-year-old "Peer Coaching Program" Mark Stoner directs at California State University in Sacramento sounds like a blend of psychology and communications theory (Stoner teaches communications), but there's a hint of management language about it as well. In Stoner's program the idea of teaching as decision-making lends a general framework to an intense, year-long

exploration of one's teaching. The work takes place between pairs of faculty (almost always from different disciplines) and in seminar meetings of all the pairs together — usually only 10 - 12 faculty total. The program calls for a large and serious commitment. There are seven seminar meetings per year as well as seven or eight cycles of coaching. In all, the program asks 90 to 100 hours of its participants.

Like DeZure's program, it is studiously non-judgmental in tone. Discussions begin with several assumptions:

- that teaching behavior is driven by invisible cognitive skills,
- that people can grow cognitively throughout life, and
- that cognition can be enhanced by a skilled partner.

Remediation (or "self-modification," as Stoner describes it), if any is needed, becomes an entirely personal and individual matter, almost a by-product of striving to become more purposeful and more reflective about one's teaching and of developing a kind of precision in talking about it.

The peer coaching process involves pre-class conferences, classroom observations, and post-class conferences. And during the year the pairs switch roles, taking turns observing, coaching, and being observed. The coaching itself becomes a very rich and complex relationship by year's end, but it begins with a simple discussion model that tries to:

- clarify lesson goals and objectives
- anticipate appropriate teaching strategies and decisions
- decide on what evidence of student achievement will look like, and
- agree on what the coach's data gathering focus and procedures will be.

"We teach in such different ways," says Stoner. "If I said to you (as coach), 'Tell me if I'm clear in my lesson today,' that would be asking you to make a judgment, and that's not appropriate because you're really not in a position to make that judgment." A coach might respond by asking what he could record that might help the faculty member decide if the lesson was clear. "That might lead to having the coach write down verbatim the directions that the faculty member gives to students. That gives him a script to see whether the directions have gaps in them, for example."

A Friendly Mirror

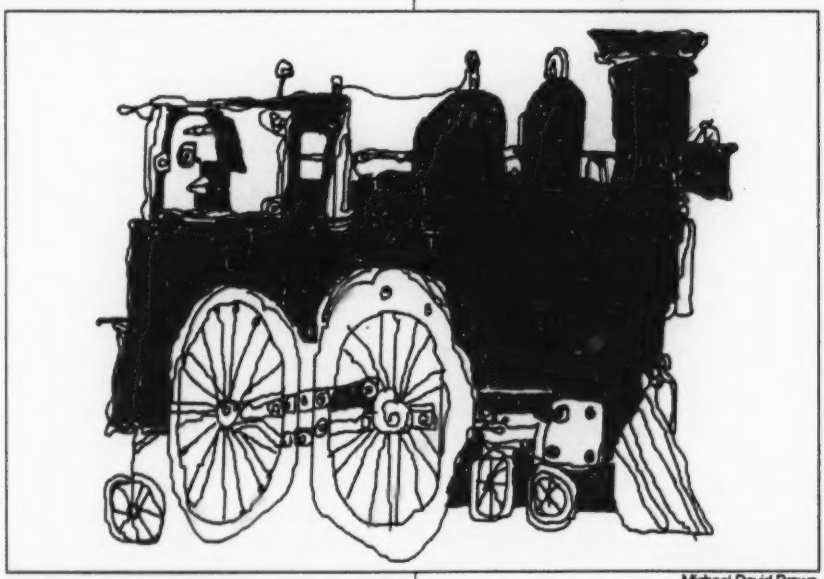
So why not just use a tape recorder or video camera? "The coach's task is to be as neutral as possible at first, to get away from evaluation (that has to go), but as we become more sophisticated as coaches, we now begin to talk about coach as *mediator*." By mediator, Stoner means the kind of friend who is able to bring you back to seeing yourself moving both within and toward a set of goals you've already described as yours. "Sometimes in my busyness as a teacher, I lose track of [those goals]," says Stoner. "And so the sophisticated coach can help discuss the data, unpack insights, so that the teacher understands what that data really means [in relation to] where they want to go. A machine can't do that."

Different Trains

If all this sounds very much focused on the teacher, it's student reaction that deepens the process. Stoner explains it this way: At some point in the year at least one faculty member will disclose that he often feels he is walking into the classroom not knowing exactly what he wants to do with the content he thinks he should be delivering. That disclosure leads to an examination of purposes and approaches, and the faculty member becomes reinvigorated, makes changes in his approach.

"When some of the participants first start to make significant shifts in their teaching," says Stoner, "student evaluations go down. But if they persist in the process, we find that **ultimately student evaluations go up**. What we suspect is happening is that at first (and in a less sensitive fashion) the faculty member is saying 'Ah, I know where I am; I know where I want to go,' and they begin doing that without the insight that where the students want to go is also important." Unless faculty and students can get on the same train (of thought) pointed in a common learning direction, they're both headed for disaster.

"[Participants come to] realize that there's more to this than just the cognitive dimension," says Stoner.



Michael David Brown

"They need to make decisions about about how the students are going to be **feeling** as well as what they're going to be **knowing**. And they need to make decisions about how the students are going to be **behaving** as well as thinking and feeling. It's a more sophisticated approach to teaching."

Partners in Learning: Studying Students

New Jersey's state-wide "Partners in Learning" program remains unique among faculty development initiatives in its unwavering focus on **student learning**. As the program's founder — the late Joseph Katz — wrote, "The thrust of the approach . . . is to convert faculty into investigators of the learning of their students."

As in Stoner's peer coaching program, pairs of faculty take turns observing each other teach once a month, and they engage in an on-going dialogue about what they observe. At the end of each year, participants assess their experiences by writing a personal essay about them. Some of the 24 campuses collect and publish these to share with the faculty at large.

In New Jersey, instead of meeting in seminars with agendas and topics, the pairs meet as a group once a month and talk in an almost completely unstructured way about how it's all going. Periodically, the campus coordinators also meet as a group to compare their experiences on different campuses. Now that the program has involved nearly 450 faculty since 1987 (on some campuses one third to one half of the faculty have participated), the meetings remain popular with (and open to) faculty no longer involved in observing and being observed.

Dilating Pupils

But the unique feature of the program — and the one faculty participants end up talking most affectingly about — remains the student interviews. Each half of a faculty pair selects three student interviewees from the class or classes being observed. Normally, they use volunteers, but make sure these include a cross-section of student types. Throughout the year each member of the pair meets individually with their three to discuss their learning. The questions range from "Why are you taking this course?" to "Do you take notes in class? What do you do with them?" and "How did you feel about what happened in class today?" or "If you were the teacher, what would you do in this class?"

Martin Finkelstein of the New Jersey Institute for Collegiate Teaching and Learning remembers how Joe Katz's "dog and pony show" for skeptical faculty often had him spontaneously running out into the hall and grabbing two or three students at random and persuading them to come in and be interviewed before the faculty. Katz, trained as a psychotherapist, began the process by asking simple questions about the students' families and why they chose their major. After a while, he'd invite faculty to ask questions. "Faculty loved it," says Finkelstein. "It was very enlightening for them even though what the students said wasn't very unusual in itself."

Where They Live

On the other hand, in talking with students "you find out a lot of stuff you'd really rather not know," says Marilyn Dietrich, who teaches architecture at Mercer County Community College. You find out about divorces, abusive families, lingering diseases. You find students with several kids working 20 to 30 hours in part-time jobs and commuting to school. "When you see what some students are up against, it's amazing they make it through," she says. "I don't think I could have when I was in college."

Dietrich has participated in the program since 1988. When she talks about it, it's what she learned in interviews with students that first year that remains emblematic of what she continues to get from the program. She talks about a particular student, a crusty, just-give-me-the-problem-and-I'll-give-you-an-answer sort of guy. He wasn't much interested in refining his ideas in response to other's reactions, nor in bringing much of his own personal depth to bear on the assignments. As Dietrich got to know more about his family, his motives, his likes and dislikes, she found they had a lot in common, she was able to reach him. Connections between his childhood and his response to a project involving a design for a child's play structure still stand out in her memory.

"The experience gave me such a high," she recalls. "If I could discern what my students' learning styles were and reach them in the way *they* think, I could be such a better teacher for them."

"The notion that all this isn't totally non-evaluative *dies hard*," laments Martin Finkelstein. When the program began it was called "The Master Faculty Program," and some faculty were incensed, saying the name suggested if some were "masters," others must be "slaves." Despite her own enthusiasm, Marilyn Dietrich thinks perhaps being observed just isn't right for everybody. She has a good friend she regards as a fine teacher who says, "That's my special place — the classroom — and I don't want anybody else in there." As Joseph Katz used to say, next to the bedroom, the classroom remains the most private place in America. ■

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For Further Reading:

David C. Berliner. *If teachers were thought of as executives.* Washington, D.C.: Dingle Associates, Inc, 1983. Available as an ERIC Document: ED 245357.

Reuven Feuerstein, et al. *Instructional Enrichment: An Intervention Program for Cognitive Modifiability.* Baltimore: University Park Press, 1980.

Joseph Katz and Mildred Henry. *Turning Professors into Teachers: A New Approach to Faculty Development and Student Learning.* New York: Macmillan, 1988.

Richard Shavelson and Pamela Stern. "Research on Teachers' Pedagogical Thoughts, Judgments, Decisions and Behaviors." *Educational Research* 51 (1981), 455-498.

RESOURCES

Teachers' Favorites

Before the American Association of Higher Education convened its sixth forum on exemplary teaching as part of its annual conference last month, it asked participants to name a book or article on teaching they would recommend to their peers. The results were collated and distributed at the meeting. Below find a sampling from the five pages of books and articles recommended.

Items recommended by several participants

- Robert Boice. *The New Faculty Member.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992.
- Stephen Brookfield. *The Skillful Teacher: On Technique, Trust, and Responsiveness in the Classroom.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992.
- Peter Elbow. *Writing Without Teachers.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.

The list also included multiple recommendations for Elbow's article "Ranking, Evaluating, and Liking: Sorting Out Three Forms of Judgment," which appeared in *College English* 55:2 (February, 1993).

Since *Writing Without Teachers*, Elbow has also produced *Embracing Contraries: Explorations in Learning and Teaching* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). Together with Pat Balanoff and Sheryl Fontaine, he has edited an updated report on "freewriting" called *Nothing Begins with N* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991).

- David Johnson, Roger Johnson, and Karl A. Smith. *Active Learning: Cooperation in the Classroom.* Edina, MN: Interaction Book Company, 1991. (Cf. *The National Teaching and Learning Forum* Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 1-3.)
- Thomas V. McGovern, ed. *Handbook for Enhancing Undergraduate Education in Psychology.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 1993.
- Maryellen Weimer. *Improving College Teaching.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1991.

A Sampling of Other (Less Familiar) Items

- J. B. Baron and R. J. Sternberg, eds. *Teaching Thinking Skills: Theory and Practice.* Freeman, NY: 1987. (Cf. *The National Teaching and Learning Forum,* Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 1-3.)
- David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky. *Facts, Artifacts and Counterfacts.* Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1986.
- Inge Bell. *This Book Is Not Required.* Fort Bragg, CA: The Small Press, 1990.
- Shaun Gallagher. *Hermeneutics and Education.* Albany: SUNY Press, 1992.
- Robert Grudin. *The Grace of Great Things: Creativity and Innovation.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992.
- J. Michael. "A Behavioral Perspective on College Teaching." *The Behavior Analyst* 14, 229-239.
- Joseph D. Novak and D. Bob Gowin. *Learning How to Learn.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Hyman Ruchlis and Sandra Oddo. *Clear Thinking: A Practical Introduction.* Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1990.
- Dennis Wolf. "The Art of Questioning." *Academic Connections,* The College Board, Winter, 1987.

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INSIDE

The Thinking Heart — a look at Alverno College's use of affect and social process to teach for something beyond facts and content — plus a portrait of how a graduate put those lessons to use on the job.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK — **"The Power of the Unexpected"** at AAHE's 1993 'blizzard' convention

"Ten Fundamental Laws of Learning" — Wm. Reinsmith reviews some memorable, but often forgotten basics.

Peers and Teaching — profiles of three successful teaching improvement programs that thrive on observation and conversation.

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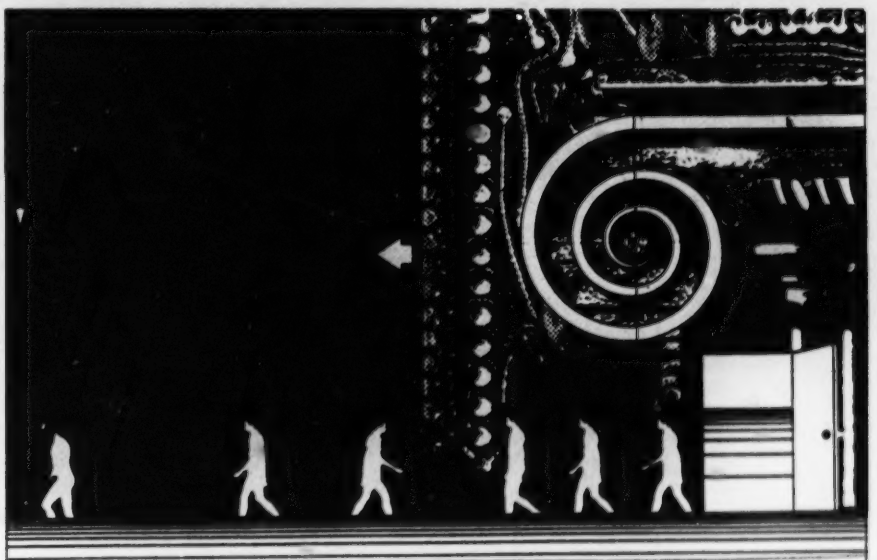

Teaching For Character

A year and a half ago, Louis Schmier, 52, a tenured professor of history at Valdosta State College, decided to revolutionize his teaching. He'd always felt a stronger affinity with teaching than research, but he hadn't always followed his heart.

"When I started here twenty-six years ago, I organized all kinds of extracurricular seminars, costume lectures, that sort of thing, but when I came up for promotion, I was told that wasn't professional activity," Schmier remembers. Rebuffed in his early enthusiasm for teaching, he threw himself into publishing and built up a reputation as a scholar of Southern Jewish history. His teaching retreated into a classic lecture-discussion model unconsciously oriented toward what he describes as "better students," a phrase he now uses with derision.

"I don't compare students now," he says. "I see students running on different race tracks. I see them as having their own particular potential to be developed and not to be compared."

"Just because a student supposedly doesn't 'have it' does not mean that student is not capable of 'getting it,' " he says. "I unabashedly believe every student has a unique potential, the striving for which is the dual responsibility of both student and professor."

Removing Handcuffs

In essence Schmier decided to apply the lessons he was learning in his personal life to his professional life. At home he found himself struggling with the problems of a younger son who, while scoring 162 on standard IQ tests, suffered from a condition known as "attention deficit disorder" (ADD). The condition had been misdiagnosed and poorly understood, and as a result his son had almost completely lost confidence, focus, and direction in his life. "My brain had gone to mush," says Schmier. "I'd seen my son in handcuffs too many times. I was going through the motions in teaching. I felt off balance. I wanted to get into the classroom, but I had created a scholarly reputation that was feeding on itself. I was caught." Finally, Schmier and his wife found a school in Maine dedicated to dealing with special students through a "character-based curriculum."

The school asks parents and students some challenging questions: Who are you? Where are you in your life? Where do you want to go? How are you going to get there? It keeps asking those questions, as what a jazz musician might call the curricular back beat to all its instruction.

Inspired by the new hope he'd found in Maine, Schmier began applying his own version of this character-based approach in his classes.

Revitalized by the success he's found in the classroom and by the daily "power walks" he takes at

4:00 A.M., Schmier has begun sharing his experiences in a series of "Random Thoughts," personal letters to the college teaching community sent out over the Internet. Not everyone has been pleased with what Schmier has had to say. He's shocked colleagues on campus and across the Internet by declaring that he's "more interested in developing character than in teaching subject matter *per se*."

At the same time Schmier admits he's not sure character can be taught. "Every student has native abilities," he says. "What one does with those abilities is called character." So Schmier has developed an approach that requires students to show what they're made of. It's an approach designed to build self-esteem and teach students how to learn — as well as teaching them American history. "I'm dealing with both their intellectual and moral capacities. What I'm saying is that if they have self-confidence and the courage to take risks there isn't a thing they can't do."

The Power In Triads

Schmier uses **triads of students** as the building blocks of his method. Why triads instead of the more familiar pairs often used in cooperative and collaborative learning approaches? Power. "The triads are fully empowered," says Schmier. "I don't want tie votes." The triads act as one on tests, papers, and weekly quizzes. For example, if a triad decides not to take one of the two exams that precede the final, it isn't obliged to, but the percentage value of the final exam (which all students must take) increases for students in that triad.

The triads become arenas in which students drop their fears and inhibitions about learning and begin to exercise their power as learners. The solidarity these units develop often leads to **triads working in tandem.**

Louis Schmier

Study groups composed of two or three triads often evolve three or four weeks into the semester.

Just as the groups practice self-support, they also police themselves. If one student fails to contribute to a group paper or exam, the triad may vote to remove his or her name from the work, and the student then receives no credit on that assignment.

"I wanted to evolve highly motivated individuals and the triads offer a mechanism for doing that," says Schmier. "Fundamentally, teaching is a social process," he says; hence it seemed sensible to use a social process to achieve an individual psychological and cognitive end — learning. If students feel their own power, their self-esteem and self-confidence will flourish and they will learn more than they would through other approaches, Schmier maintains.

Inside The Classroom

At the beginning of the semester, Schmier's students in undergraduate American history receive a twenty-page syllabus. The syllabus outlines all the nuts and bolts of the course in great detail. It explains the triads, the quizzes, papers, readings for each class meeting, outside readings, and the grading system. Thus the normal subject matter challenge of a course stands clearly spelled out and familiar, but the triad method makes it new. "Students are uncertain at first, a little scared," Schmier admits. But they adapt. "They know exactly what they're expected to be prepared to discuss each day, but they can change it," says Schmier. "If they feel they're not finished with something, they can say so, and I have to revise the calendar." In the first two days, Schmier presents some basic study skills. He outlines the long-practiced SQ3R (Scan, Question, Read, Review, Recite) method, and then launches into the assignments.

In a typical class period students have arrived early and already begun discussing the day's assignment in their triads. In early May, for example, students

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read Milton Goldin's article "The Gospel of Andrew Carnegie" and were asked to discuss the question: "Was Andrew Carnegie a moral person?" In April they looked at an article by Alice Hall on James Madison and asked "Are radicals dangerous? Was Madison a radical? To whom?" Schmier arrives and joins one or more groups in discussion. Ten or fifteen minutes later, the discussion shifts from the triads to the class as a whole where students participate as individuals. That phase of the class lasts for about thirty-five minutes. This discussion takes different forms. Sometimes it's questions and answers on the material; at others it becomes a debate on the issues.

"It's not all peaches and cream," Schmier admits. Some students resist the approach calling him "interfering" and saying to him: "How dare you get involved in my personal affairs. I don't like to talk. I am a listener. I don't like you telling me that I have no confidence." Schmier takes it all in stride: Before he began using the triads, the normal drop-out rate for his classes was 30%. Despite student complaints, the drop-out rate has sunk to 5% since he began using the triad method. And, he says, grades are higher.

Each week students complete a 15 - 20 question self-evaluation on how they're doing in the class. "Have you done the reading?" it asks. "Have you met your goals?" "The students are brutally honest," says Schmier. "It stuns me. It's almost as if they're waiting for someone to ask them these questions.

"A student will write on the evaluation, 'I'm going to study harder,' and I'll write back 'What is it going to take for you to study harder?' or 'Why didn't you study harder before? Think about it.' "

Self-Improvement Class

Slogans play an important part in Schmier's (serious) classroom humor. "I'll come in with one of my bits of wisdom like, 'A person who does not stand for something will fall for anything.' " Schmier isn't uncomfortable having his course described as a self-improvement class. "It's a self-improvement class that uses the subject of history as a tool, and they're learning history," he says.

The course carries a formidable reading load. In addition to reading George Tindall's *America* from cover to cover, students read 500 pages of additional material from secondary sources. They write reports on this reading organized around a large set of terms they're expected to work into the essays in ways that demonstrate their growing understanding of what they mean.

The Final

The syllabus — which students have had all semester — contains four questions, one of which will constitute half of the final exam. (Fifty short-answer questions on the text make up the other half.) Students write and submit the final — which counts for 40% of their grade — as triads. They receive individual grades, however, based on their total class work. "When they hand in an exam, if the essay is inadequate, I send it back to them for revision," says Schmier. Hence students can't escape the effort of trying their best.

Changing The Teacher

The character-based approach has changed Schmier, he says. Describing himself as "having a heap of arrogance" in his personality, he says the class has made him more humble. "I'm more sensitive to the students. I always had name blocks before. Suddenly, I have a photographic

The Ghost of Helen Trombly

Most of Louis Schmier's "Random Thoughts" report Schmier's reactions to how his character-based approach is being received by students and colleagues. But recently he found himself remembering an unlikely model for his experiments from his own distant past. Excerpts from his tribute to her follow.

"I'd been walking the darkened streets again, thinking about job training vs. education, etc. I hadn't rounded the first corner when into my head popped, 'It's all in the wrist, people. It's all in the wrist,' and my thoughts began to center on diminutive, rotund, buxom Miss Helen Trombly. She had been my typing/shorthand teacher in high school way back in 1956. She was quite a lady though no one appreciated her at the time. She didn't cut a striking figure. She didn't light up a room when she entered. I can't say she carried herself with dignity. If anything, she was bland.

"Miss Trombly was not content with teaching us merely to learn how to type and take shorthand. As I look back, I think she was more interested in preparing us for life than for a life of typing and taking shorthand. There were no mindless Gregg typing or shorthand manuals to be found in the class. No chart of either the keyboard or the shorthand symbols — squigglies as Miss Trombly called them — hung on the walls. Instead, the walls were draped with printed quotations that she changed every week. There were no dull repetition drills. She expected us to learn how to set our fingers on the typewriter and learn the keyboard and learn the shorthand 'squiggle stuff' on our own. In class, to sharpen our typing and shorthand skills — so she said — we copied bits and pieces she had selected from Hemmingway, Greene, Faulkner, Rand and a few others! To practice our margin and tab skills on the typewriter, we copied passages from Shakespeare, Pope, Keats, *Death of a Salesman, The Glass Managerie, The Cherry Orchard, Requiem for a Heavyweight,* and a few other plays. With about fifteen minutes left in the hour, she would stop us and ask what we felt about the passages we had typed. 'Be a thinking person,' she'd quietly admonish us if we hesitated, 'not an living typewriter.' 'There's more to life than being a secretary,' she'd warn us. To develop our shorthand speed (now stupidly lost) and typing dictation speed, half the class formally debated issues while the other half struggled to record it. And we had to come in prepared to debate! As I remember, we discussed civil rights and racism, sex, communism, religion, democracy, etc. Nor would she allow us merely 'to get by.' I can still hear her firmly caring melodious voice reaching out and saying, 'Louis, is that really the best you can do?' or 'Where's your pride in what you're doing, Schmier?' 'Be honest, Louis.' or 'Stop being scared, Mr. Schmier. Think for yourself!'

"Miss Trombly started haunting me again today, and showing me the way. I wish I could thank her." ■

memory for names. So, obviously there was a distance there between me and the students that I didn't even realize that's just broken down in this triad system."

While some of his colleagues have attacked him for trying a radical method, at least two of his peers have decided to try the method in their classes next semester.

"The worst part of this is the pain, the pain of seeing students holding themselves back, fearing they can't do it. That tears me up. I need a degree in psychology to handle some of the things I see with students. In fact I'm taking some courses right now. You have to be a counselor to some extent.

"This isn't for everybody. It's not just a structure. It requires teacher growth. So, I'm not doing this because it's easy," says Schmier. "It's not easy. I'm doing it because it's the right thing to do. I'm following my gut."

"Random Thoughts"

Louis Schmier's "Random Thoughts" are echoed on several Internet mailing lists devoted to discussions of teaching. Bill Southerly of Frostburg State University in Maryland maintains an especially friendly and active list on teaching psychology. Southerly's list, called TIPS, carries Schmier's "Thoughts" despite some complaints from some recipients. Favorable comments have outweighed unfavorable five to one, Southerly reports.

To subscribe to the TIPS list send an e-mail message to: **listserv@fre.fsu.umd.edu** (Internet) or **listserv%fre.fsu.umd.edu@cunyvm** In the body of the message write "Subscribe TIPS (your first name, your last name)."

To send Southerly a message without subscribing, address e-mail to: **tips@fre.fsu.umd.edu** (Internet) or: **tips%fre.fsu.umd.edu@cunyvm**

Schmier's "Thoughts" and other interesting materials from the Canadian-based Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education are available via the society's electronic "Forum for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education." To subscribe send e-mail to: **listserv@unbvm1.bitnet** The message should read: "Subscribe Stlhe-L (your first, last name)." Reavley Gair (**rgair@unb.ca**), director of the Teaching Centre at the University of New Brunswick, maintains the list.

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STUDENTS

Five Ways to Improve Written Responses to Student Work

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As Writing Center Director, tutor, and teacher, I have tried many strategies in making written responses to student work. I have concluded that the rhetorical situations of the teacher speaking in class and the teacher manifested in written responses are not always as similar, or complementary, as we might want to believe. Considering how students react to both my own written remarks, and, perhaps more honestly, to the remarks of others in my presence as tutor, has suggested to me that there are five things we might try in order to make our written responses more effective, and to compensate for the rhetorical distance inherent in written responses.

1. **Avoid the use of "but" after a positive comment.** Nothing negates an otherwise positive comment more than to "disallow" it as in this example: "You have a good idea here, but you need to. . ." Students are usually drawn so much more strongly to what follows the "but" that they either hardly notice the positive comment, or see it mainly as a strategy to "soften the blow" that follows. It is more effective to remove the "but" altogether, and to allow the positive comment to stand as its own sentence. For example, "You have a good idea here. You need to. . . " Better yet might be at least one more sentence to further distance the positive statement from possible negation, as in this example: "You have a good idea here. You clearly understood the reading. You need to. . . "

2. **Use the student's name in the body of the comment.** In written responses, the teacher is not physically present, and thus, is already "distant" to some extent. As a result, written comments often seem more formal, and less personal. Using the student's name even once does a great deal to compensate for the distance inherent in written comments. For example, "You have a good idea here, Mary. You need to. . . "

3. **Avoid humor, especially even the mildest sarcasm.** Many of us have good-natured humor as part of our classroom personas. But such humor, especially sarcasm, often does not work in written comments. Again, the more formal, less personal, and more distant placement of the teacher often combine to make humor appear mean-spirited and angry. As a result, students are almost never humored by teachers' attempts to be humorous. The rhetorical situation of the written comment cannot be sustained by the teacher's in-class persona in this area.

4. **Do not try to write what is best said in person.** No amount of compensation can make up for the differences between written comments and a personal discussion. To be sure, we do not have time to meet with every one of our students in every case. But I am convinced we often spend more energy trying to "sound right" in our written comments than we would spend in a conversation. I have observed comments that are three pages long, in which at least two of the pages are struggling to frame the substance of the other page. I am convinced that a smile would have at least as much success.

5. **Be especially sensitive when offering "commands."** Comments such as "please see me" or "please take this to the Writing Center" are almost

always read as punitive. The idea of inviting students in for a conference is often a good idea. But such an invitation warrants explanation. For example, "You have a good idea here, Mary. You clearly understood some of the reading. I would like to work with you on the parts of the reading that you did not appear to understand. So that we might work together, would you please come by my office?" Students are especially wary of "commands," and we are obliged to be especially sensitive when offering them. Sadly, as simple as these five strategies are, they are rarely used. As a result, what we are trying to say is often misread or, worse, read as frustrating or uncaring. Only when we become more aware of our written voices can we hope to have our students become more aware of what we are saying, and what we are meaning.

BOOKS

The Androgyny of Knowing

Judy Greene
Associate Director
Center for Teaching and Learning
University of Delaware

In ***Knowing and Reasoning in College: Gender Related Patterns in Students' Intellectual Development***, Marcia Baxter Magolda reports on an extensive, qualitative, longitudinal study of students' learning in the college years. Following the pioneering work of W. G. Perry, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years: A Scheme*, and M. F. Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing*, Baxter Magolda extends the inquiry into students' minds by adding two components missing in the previous works. First, she treats both genders in her sample. Second, she follows students over a five year period, tracing their cognitive growth through an extensive interview and coding system.

In the end, Baxter Magolda concludes that learning patterns are "related to, but not dictated by gender." While some patterns may be used more frequently by one gender, both genders combine approaches at different stages of their development. Her conclusion, that these parallel "patterns are equally complex" and must be equally valued to create the "conditions necessary for the most complex forms of knowing," also extends our understanding of knowledge acquisition beyond the findings of the earlier works.

Overall, the book makes a valuable contribution to both academic and student support services personnel. At last we can see in one volume some of the possibilities for what might happen if academic and student services providers worked together toward a common goal: the empowerment of students through the development of their natural abilities. Of course, as Baxter Magolda points out, that would mean we would all need to approach teaching and learning as "contextual knowers" ourselves. This would mean that we educators would need to increase our own abilities to be "fluid and flexible" in our approaches to educational practice, instead of relying on standard teaching formulae. In helping students learn how to learn, we would need to shift or even relinquish long held assumptions about who is entitled, privileged, and powerful in the academy. Baxter Magolda is refreshingly realistic in pointing out that some of the old patterns and attitudes we hold as educators present some of the major hindrances to change.

Baxter Magolda also furthers the arguments for what R. Kegan calls the Three C's: "confirmation, contradiction, and continuity," (Kegan, *The Evolving Self: Problem and Process in Human Development*). These concepts refer to supporting students as they face change, providing experiences that challenge their current views, and providing stability to assist as they make the transition from the previous self into the developing self.

The book presents sound evidence connecting these notions with the development of complex thinking and makes a convincing case for educators who want students to develop all their thinking abilities. Regardless of their gender, we must provide students the following to encourage fully complex thinking: Professors who demonstrate caring and helpful attitudes towards students; planned, sustained experiences which help students know each other and their professors; opportunities for students to engage in active, collaborative learning guided by clear explanations and goals; opportunities to engage in collaborative interactions with peers which connect content to real life and provide for mutual responsibility for learning (both independence and interdependence); help for students in understanding our feedback on their work; and freedom of expression and the valuing of contradictory points of view. Baxter Magolda's work moves us an additional step towards reducing the stereotypes about the different ways women and men learn. Not only do both genders use both types of learning modes (albeit differently), as Baxter Magoida concludes, "Both individual and relational modes of learning are essential."

"Both individual and relational modes of learning are essential."

For faculty and faculty developers looking for practical applications of the learning theory, the Introduction to Part Two and Chapters 8-9 are a must, although taken alone they could be confusing to readers unfamiliar with learning theory. For Student Affairs personnel, Chapters 10-11 serve a similar purpose.

If you are drawn by the power of stories, this book will provide a rich body of student voices describing their joys and struggles with learning. It also provides those interested in qualitative, narrative-based research with a sound model. If you are looking for questionnaires and coding systems for conducting classroom research on cognitive growth or changes in higher levels of thinking, the instruments in the Resources section provide useful and statistically sound examples.

• Baxter Magolda, Marcia B. *Knowing and Reasoning in College: Gender-Related Patterns in Students' Intellectual Development.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992.

SOFTWARE

Gradebook = Powerbook

Neither of these computer programs resolves the many philosophical questions about grading, but either one allows faculty powerful command of the numbers (or letters). Both were written by working faculty. Both make room for a wide range of grading systems and record-keeping needs. Both offer basic report generation and password security.

These are DOS programs (no Windows or Macintosh versions available) which feature extensive pop-up menus that give users ready access to all command features.

Grade Guide 4.0

Grade Guide's author, Jon Kane, teaches statistics, mathematics and computer literacy at the University of Wisconsin - Whitewater. He began working on the program in 1985. It's now in its fourth released version. Of the two programs, Kane's is the less powerful, but the more friendly. (And the less expensive: $40.)

The program came to my attention via a faculty member who praised it for allowing her to print out anonymous, randomized postings of class grades by student I.D. numbers, and for its ability to manage grade averaging and weighting easily.

Grade Guide allows users to set up grade categories as number grades, letter grades or both and display them in customized class rosters. For example, suppose a given final course grade derives from two exams, a paper, ten homework assignments (with one of these counting twice as much as the others), and a final. The program allows users to configure the class roster so that it displays student names along with all of these grades or with certain categories — like homework and exams — averaged.

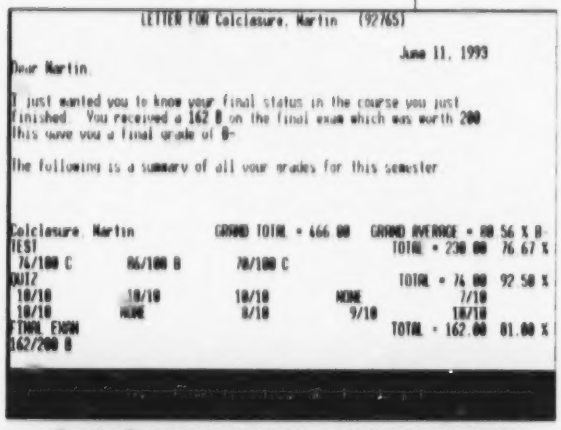
The program also allows faculty to import the lists of student names and I.D. in their classes from files provided by the student records office so that basic data entry can begin with entering grades, saving at least one level of clerical labor.

The program figures means, medians, standard deviations, allows customized grade definition, figures Z-scores, and final grades. Earlier versions of the program didn't calculate a final grade. Kane says he didn't think it was right somehow for a teacher to just look at numbers a machine had crunched and assign a grade. "I felt faculty should look at the numbers and give the grade some thought," he says. But his philosophy bent to a general demand for the feature. His documentation, however, makes a point of recommending a review of the final grades the program calculates.

The program also includes a basic text editor and a variety of form letters and reports that draw data from class records. The individualized letters to students reflect the user- and student-friendly character of Kane's software.

VAR Grade 6.0

Dennis Revie, who teaches at California Lutheran University, began working on *VAR Grade* in 1984 to handle the grading for one of his large biochemistry courses. The course had many different sections and involved a variety of tests and assignments that rotated within the sections. He needed help sorting out all the numbers. Although he's a chemist, math had always been Revie's favorite subject in school; so working up a statistical package in his new passion — computers — was fun.


LETTER FOR Colclasure, Martin (92765)

June 11, 1993

Dear Martin

I just wanted you to know your final status in the course you just finished. You received a 162 B on the final exam which was worth 200 this gave you a final grade of B-

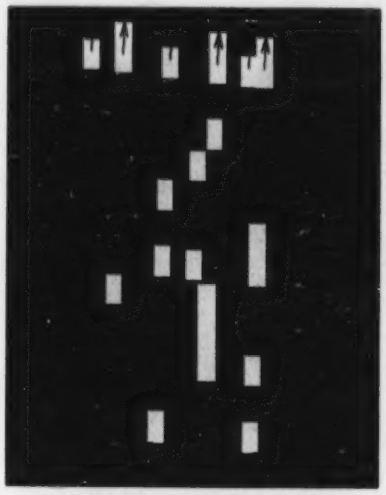
The following is a summary of all your grades for this semester

Colclasure, Martin GRAND TOTAL = 466.00 GRAND AVERAGE = 80.56 % B-

TEST
74/100 C 86/100 B 70/100 C TOTAL = 230.00 76.67 %

QUIZ
10/10 10/10 10/10 NONE 7/10
10/10 NONE 8/10 9/10 10/10
FINAL EXAM TOTAL = 74.00 92.50 %
162/200 B TOTAL = 162.00 81.00 %

Grade Guide's Individualized letter to students



Correlations in VAR Grade

His affinity for math shows. For sheer number-crunching and graphing power *VAR Grade* seems unsurpassed. The program calculates means, medians, standard deviations, T-scores, Z-scores, and a host of other statistical routines. It also includes "what if" functions that allow projections of the effect on overall grades of weighting task values in different ways. "You wouldn't believe how many different grading systems there are," says Revie. "This program lets you do any of them."

While *Grade Guide* will produce one bar graph of overall class performance, Revie's program can produce dozens. *VAR Grade* can also produce composite graphs picturing an individual student's performance in comparison to the class as a whole or a series of graphs of each graded assignment profiled against the class average, median, etc. The program even allows teachers to create "drag and drop" seating charts.

One graphing routine maps the correlation between two exams or assignments the user wants to compare. Revie uses this feature a lot himself. "My personal feeling," he says, "is that not enough faculty members spend time thinking about their tests and what they mean. If they did that, they would probably do a better job of writing tests." Correlations, he says, provoke the kinds of insights he's talking about. "But I don't proselytize. I just put [the

5C

statistical capability] there in the program and hope they use it."

While *VAR Grade* (which sells for $50) has more features than *Grade Guide*, it requires more computer savvy to use comfortably. For example, the report- or letter-writing operations in *VAR Grade* are more challenging to use than *Grade Guide*'s, especially if you want to write your own. In *VAR Grade* you must learn the program's merge language and type in the proper codes for "date," "final grade," etc., character by character using your own external editor. In *Grade Guide*, you create the letter in your favorite word processor, save it as an ASCII text file in *Grade Guide*'s directory, and then insert the proper merge codes via a pop-up menu from within *Grade Guide*. It's more like writing a macro in WordPerfect and less like writing a program.

On the other hand, if you worry about your data you'll take comfort in the fact that *VAR Grade* is almost klutz-proof. The program checks for reasonable task scores, and will not easily let you exit without saving your data. It also prevents accidental deletions of your files by making them "read only."

With all its graphic features, *VAR Grade* really ought to be a Windows program instead of DOS. In fact, Revie says he is working on a Windows version, but he won't promise when it will be completed.

VAR Grade 6.0 and *Grade Guide 4.0* are both shareware, the honor system that lets you try them before you buy them. Registered users of the programs receive printed manuals and the most recent version of the programs. Site licenses and volume discounts are available for both programs.

For more information, contact

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Madison, WI 53705-5218
E-Mail: (Internet) kanej@uwwvax.uww.edu

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Thousand Oaks, CA 91360-6819
Phone: (805) 523-7546
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CASE STUDIES

History And Its Methods

Patricia Hutchings
Director, The Teaching Initiative
American Association for Higher Education

In an earlier discussion, Bryan, an older, B+ student in the course History and Its Methods, complains all the talk of methods isn't what he expected. When are they going to get down to some "*real* history," he wonders. "We're always walking around the edges of history rather than getting to the heart," he says. "We don't ever talk about *events*."

Professor Green quotes from the 15-page syllabus's course description in an effort to prove the students are getting what was advertised. Other students join Bryan's complaint a bit less thoughtfully, saying, "Shouldn't we be learning about what happened when?" Green cuts off further discussion with a short restatement of the idea that the point of view of the historian is as important as literal facts in understanding history. A knowledge of historical methods is what the class is about, she says, and returns — without having gotten help or support from her team-teaching colleague Sam Marston, who sits recording midterm grades — to her lecture on mythopoeic thinking and the narrative mode of explaining the past.

Green is a classical historian; Marston, a specialist in American political history. They have taught the course together for three years, and are pleased with the reflective aims of the course.

• • •

There's a terrible racket as some sixty students scrape their chairs around so they can face each other in groups of three or four. Professor Susan Green is passing out a handout she and her colleague, Sam Marston, have recently devised for the introductory course they team teach in the general-education program here at Random State, History and Its Methods:

"Ok now, listen up," Sam shouts out across the noise. "I want to give you some instructions. We're going to have you work in groups like you did a couple of weeks ago — this time on the topic we've been talking about for the last few days: modes of thought."

There's a period of silence in the room as students settle in and read the handout:

'Read the following paragraph carefully. Critically evaluate the explanation it provides of student demonstrations in Russia. Then come to consensus in your group about whether the mode of thought employed is: a) narrative b) analytic or c) narrative/analytic.

> The penalty of conscript service for taking part in student demonstrations was bitterly resented. Resentment had not died down when the universities opened again in the autumn. All through the following year there were small threatening incidents. Towards the end of 1900 passions flared up again in Kiev University, where a protest meeting was broken up by troops and police and some five hundred students were arrested. About half the number were drafted into the army. Immediately there were sympathetic student disorders in Kharkov, Moscow, and St. Petersburg. (Richard Charques. *The Twilight of Imperial Russia*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1958. p. 68.)

Susan watches from the side of the room as students unzip backpacks, open notebooks, borrow pencils, cough, shuffle, and finally get settled into their groups to begin to read. Slowly a silence comes over the room. Susan strolls back around to where Sam is standing. "All this silence is eerie," she whispers. "Do you think they're ever going to *say* anything?"

But eventually the talk begins. A voice here, then one over there. In no time at all the noise level rises and lively discussion is underway. Susan and Sam smile at each other. These group exercises are a new addition to the course this year, one Susan and Sam are experimenting with. Everywhere she turns, Susan finds people talking about the power of small-group learning. She and Sam agree it's time to incorporate some group work into their class. Still, she admits to herself, it slows things down incredibly. You sacrifice coverage.

Susan decides to keep students on track by walking from group to group, listening in.

The first group she stops at is predictably in a warm-up phase: a lot of back and forth about whether they're supposed to take notes and if so who should do it . . . Everyone in the group is looking at Marcia. Susan decides to let them get going and stop back later.

"No contest," George is saying in the next group she stops at. "Of course the answer is narrative. One thing following another — a story. It's obvious." Susan smiles and moves on.

"I don't know how we're supposed to evaluate this," Barbara is saying in the next group. "I've never even heard of Kiev University." "But it's interesting to see how similar it is to stuff that's gone on here," Bryan offers. The group looks surprised. "I mean, like Vietnam, Kent State . . . ," Bryan goes on. Barbara shrugs. "Yeah, well, OK," she says. "So what's the answer?" She looks up at Susan who is standing nearby and shrugs again.

Susan decides not to intervene. Instead she stations herself discreetly by a group in the back where she's pleased to find people "on task." "It seems like a story to me," one student says. "But it's *real* isn't it?" another comes back. "And isn't the author trying to tell us *why* things happened, how one thing *caused* another? Wouldn't that make it analytical?" Another person in the group wonders about "data." It seems more to him like impressions of an event.

The next group Susan stops at is a setback. It's not modes of thought but Friday night — only a few hours away — that's on this group's mind.

Susan circles back around toward Sam. "I think we better break in," she says. "They're getting off the track." Sam argues for a few more minutes: "Things are certainly lively," he says.

A couple minutes later Susan and Sam position themselves in front of the room, and call the class back together. "So, what do you think?" Sam asks the class. In no time at all, discussion is rolling. Susan is careful to invite someone from each group to contribute; views on both sides — narrative and analytic — are put forward, and she tries to reinforce thoughtful reasoning on either side.

Susan and Sam are trading comments about modes of thought and the relative advantages and limits of each when George's hand goes up in the front row. "I see what you're after here," he says. "But what my group got into are the upcoming elections. And how little students seem to be getting involved. It's really depressing. That black guy in South Carolina: no way he'll get elected."

"I'm glad to see you making connections," says Susan. "And you're right," Sam adds, "But we can't really get off on that right now. We only have a couple more minutes and I want to be sure that the main point of the session is clear. What we're interested in here is the method of analysis." He looks at Susan, who continues: "That's right. And what we've seen today in this great discussion is that the methods we've been talking about aren't like neat, closed boxes. They aren't pure. One kind of analysis leaks over into another so that in today's example, for instance, we have several different modes of thought operating at once."

As she leaves class Susan tries to listen in to student conversations, to get a "reading" on the small-group work. Marcia is saying to Cyndi, "That was a good class. I took notes in my group and we had a good discussion." "Well, I'm glad somebody did," mutters Cyndi, "because my group was a waste of time. I'm still not sure I know what the answer was."

Behind Marcia and Cyndi are George and Bryan, talking up a storm about — Susan strains to hear — the elections and some meeting or other.

Sam comes up behind Susan. "Good class," he says. "I'm liking this group stuff." Susan isn't so sure. "It's hard," she says. "How are you supposed to know if it's *working*?" ■

CASE STUDY RESPONSES

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Blackwood, New Jersey

At a time of renewed emphasis on teaching critical and analytical thinking, history does not fare well compared to other disciplines. It is seldom mentioned as a vehicle for promoting these thinking skills. Some in the profession deny that critical thinking is an important goal of history courses. The most common approach to teaching history is still for the instructor to present a minutely detailed, albeit often carefully crafted, narrative account of some event while occasionally allowing for student questions and comments.

Given this state of affairs, it refreshes the spirit to learn that some of our colleagues do try to teach historical methods and analysis to undergraduates. Usually courses of this sort are limited to upper division majors or graduate students, who after years of exposure to the lecture method, are asked to display analytical and critical thinking skills. All students should be taught to use historical analysis and provided with opportunities to practice these skills. But should these skills be taught as a separate course or incorporated into all history courses?

In "History and Its Methods," there is certainly evidence of student confusion and anxiety about the nature and value of the course. They don't see it as a "real" history course, and they seem perplexed about being asked to analyze events they know nothing about. This, despite the fact they received a fifteen-page syllabus. We can interpret this in two ways. It may be unproductive to offer a separate course in historical methods or it may be that the instructors have not successfully explained the goals of the course.

Although "History and Its Methods" is team-taught, it appears that it is not an equal partnership. One partner does not seem fully engaged and the burden of teaching the course appears largely borne by his colleague. It hardly seems advisable to record midterm grades in class (as Sam Marston does) rather than participate in the discussions. Additionally, the knowledge that midterm grades are being recorded and the awareness

(Cont'd page 9)

(Case Study Responses - cont'd from page 8)

they will receive them at the end of class is likely to distract the students and make it difficult for them to focus on their work.

The highlights of the course are the use of analytical exercises and group discussions. Students are not just being asked to demonstrate critical thinking, they are being given opportunities to practice this skill. However, based on their comments, some students are not clear about what they are doing and why it is important. The class could have benefited from more thorough directions. The students could also use more advice on how to work effectively in groups. Since the instructors are using groups for the first time, this weakness is understandable. It also isn't surprising that the instructors feel concern about group work limiting the amount of material they can present. The thought that leaving out a single dynasty might cause irreparable harm to their students' intellectual development troubles historians generally. Perhaps we should find solace in accepting the idea that what our students learn and retain relates more strongly to the quality of our teaching than to the quantity of material we present.

The thought that leaving out a single dynasty might cause irreparable harm to their students' intellectual development troubles historians generally.

The instructors in this case may have missed an opportunity to encourage student attempts to apply their skills by discouraging them from discussing an upcoming election. They are, however, on the right track by circulating among the groups and helping to focus the discussions without interfering too much. Finally, the class seems to lack any sort of closure. Some students thought it was a meaningful experience, others were convinced it "was a waste of time." Even one of the instructors seems unsure whether the approach is working.

The instructors in "History and Its Methods" are modeling what should be done in history classes at all levels. No doubt in time they will learn how to use small group discussions more effectively and learn to take full advantage of their students' attempts to apply their newly acquired skills to contemporary events. As they become comfortable with group work, they will overcome their fear that this approach prevents them from covering all of the material.

Valerie French
The American University
Washington, D.C.

Good Greetings, Colleagues —

I am the anxious, even slightly neurotic Susan Green in this fictionalized case study. It's fascinating, even a bit scary, to remember back several years ago to the actual experience on which this classroom vignette is based. I've done more and more work with small group learning, and I still think "It's hard . . . How do you know if it's working?"

Over the years, Sam and I have been very successful at traditional lectures — with several short interludes for class discussion — mainly in history courses. We've relied on our enthusiasm, energy, command of subject, and sense of humor to motivate students. But team-teaching a course that stresses critical thinking skills just doesn't lend itself to traditional narrative/analysis presentations. We have been teaching the real-life course for about fifteen years. Each year, it seems, the struggle to develop more effective teaching approaches becomes more difficult, and we become less effective. Students actually have to practice these thinking skills, and that seems increasingly hard and unpleasant for most of them. Few have ever thought about thinking — let alone their own thinking; few have ever come up against the inherent uncertainty of knowledge; still fewer have wrestled with the logical problems entailed in explanation. Even the extra energy that comes from team-teaching no longer gets our students to dig into the course content and practice self-aware, self-critical thinking.

Giving up what has worked well for us as individual teachers was difficult. I still have a host of "what if's" every time I relinquish center stage and use small groups. What if the students don't pay attention to the tasks? What if Sam and I can't tell the difference between lively discussion and real learning? What if Sam and I are doing this all wrong? What if we end up wasting precious class minutes that the students could have used more productively? What if the very process of small group work sidetracks all of us — students and teachers — from the skills we should be working to master?

Periodic classroom feedback and end-of-semester evaluations in this course tell us that about 2/3 to 3/4 of our students say they profit from small group work in class, that it helps them learn; the others really hate it! Maybe helping 2/3 to 3/4 of the class with this kind of work is worth losing the others for a while. Can we trust their self-assessment? We want to. But frankly, we don't see that the small group work is making a significant difference in how well students can employ these skills, and it certainly has not seemed to make them feel more friendly towards the course. I'd feel more comfortable if we had some evidence that more or better learning was a product of this approach.

I still have a host of "what if's" every time I relinquish center stage and use small groups.

Yet I go back to that portion of the case that describes the group Susan was pleased to find "on task." "It seems like a story." "But it's *real*, isn't it?" "And isn't the author trying to tell us *why* things happened?" If only all small group discussions could be like this one! Students looking at a problem from a variety of perspectives, really exploring with one another defini-

tions, semantics, the various properties of narrative and analysis. There is no way Sam and I would be able to bring all those issues to the fore if we were presenting this material. Here is clear evidence of quality thought taking place when we got out of the students' way and let them take charge. How can we bottle this and share it with the rest of the class? Can Sam and I find a way to get more groups to engage in this kind of intellectual work?

Reading and reflecting on this vignette from my life shows me what the key issues are here for me: control and trust. I have a problem trusting that the students will try to learn even if I give up control of what's going on, what's being said in the classroom. Although I am determined to keep trying, when we are using small groups, I sometimes look around and wonder whether the inmates have taken over the institution.

Just last spring I team-taught a different course with another colleague. She was even more worried than I about students not doing real work in their small groups. Because this class is in Women's Studies, we made mutually supportive, collaborative work a central tenant of feminist social theory, a core value of our course. We took a few steps to lessen our discomfort by developing a variety of ways to encourage (compel?) students to work cooperatively and productively in small groups. Sometimes we asked them to come to class prepared with their tentative answers to one or more questions; the group then compared individual answers and tried to arrive at a consensus and the strongest argument in favor of that position. We often insisted that students hand in their preliminary efforts so we could be assured that each one was preparing ahead of time and not coasting on other students' efforts. Sometimes we asked for products created through work in small groups. Students handed in these products at the end of class. We commented, graded, and returned them at our next meeting.

Was this just a lot of work so we could maintain some illusion of controls? We nearly perished commenting on and evaluating thirteen separate in-class, small group exercises in addition to the papers, rewrites, and journals of some 70 students. But did we learn a lot about our students! It was abundantly clear for many that the small group work enhanced their learning. Nonetheless, on evaluations only about 3/4 of them said the small group work was crucial to their learning, and once again the others just hated it! Go figure! ■

INTERVIEW

Student Of Process

For over twenty years, Peter Frederick has taught American studies. He's loved teaching and been what he calls "a student of process" even longer. Through the years, he's published several biographies of reformers and co-authored a major American History textbook. Outside his discipline Frederick has become known as a teacher of teachers through several widely reprinted articles, among them "The Dreaded Discussion: Ten Ways to Start" (1981), "The Lively Lecture" (1986), and "The Power of Story" (1990). Each seemed ahead of its time in many ways.

Frederick is now the director of the Center for Learning and Teaching at Carleton College in Minnesota. In a recent keynote address to a seminar called "Teaching with (Com)Passion: Warming the Learning Atmosphere" sponsored by Minnesota's Busch Foundation, he focused on emotions in the classroom. "Emotions may well be the flagship idea for the future of education," he said.

"Teaching to emotions is motivational," he continued. "It focuses student attention, arouses interest, connects the student's world to ours, and builds a classroom community. Moreover, emotions trigger memories and code experience, thereby serving as retrieval cues for retention. Emotional experience in the classroom leads to cognitive insight: Affect deepens understanding. We need therefore to acknowledge the world of feelings and to take seriously the role that emotions play in teaching and learning."

He went on to elaborate on how emotions offer a means of connecting "students' lives and the content, cognitive rigor, and critical thinking that we value."

Rhem: **How did the conversation about teaching come around to this point? To talking about "emotion?"**

Frederick: Faculty development work has gone through three stages. The first started in the early 1970s and came out of instructional technology, audio/visual departments, computer-assisted instruction, and all that. People were all excited about single panacea solutions to teaching and learning problems. There was too much jargon, too much reductionist thinking. Some folks who now criticize what they call the "tyranny of technique" are, to some extent, stuck in recalling that old mid-70s model. Then in the late 1970s, early 1980s we started to set up teaching and learning centers. The emphasis was on teaching. We were getting student evaluations to improve teaching, and we were talking about teaching strategies. But that clinical model, fixing broken faculty was a mistake that the movement somehow let get into the whole area of faculty development. A lot of us made that mistake. But that development has

> "I'm not thumping just for more emotions in the classroom as therapy, but I think if the emotions are there, we need to be more aware and less afraid of that dimension in our students and in ourselves"

shifted in a very healthy way. In many places including here at Carleton, we just talk about teaching and learning programs for good teachers who want to become better. Our place is now, as

it should be, metaphorically and literally, physically, in the center of campus life.

And that connects to the shift in emphasis of at least the last five years to **learning,** of all things! The assessment movement, Pat Cross's article "Teaching for Learning," all of that is putting the attention and focus back were it belongs and where the focus of our institutions should be, which is to enhance the quality of student learning.

Rhem: **How does this history lead you to see emotions as the key to student learning? What's the connection?**

Frederick: The connection is "connections." A consistent theme for me — that I understand in deeper and deeper ways — is that the best way to break down [student] resistance to the interaction that I expect in class (and to their own work on behalf of their own empowerment) lies finding connections between the subject matter and the student's world, the student's life, . . . issues, . . . passions, developmental stage. I am so aware of how important those issues are that in the back of my head when I go into any class I'm thinking "How can I connect my goals — and I mean a rigorous spirit of inquiry and analysis of difficult texts — with these students' lives?"

Rhem: **How does what you're calling emotions differ from the importance of establishing trust or what's been called a "positive affective field" in the classroom so that students believe in and want to learn from the authority of the teacher?**

Frederick: I don't think students doubt a faculty member's authority or knowledge. That's the last thing they doubt — that the faculty member is competent. The questions they're asking are (and I'm quoting Stanford Erickson from a book he wrote years and years ago) "Is this teacher fair?" "Does this teacher care?" and things like that. I want to add to Erickson: I think students are asking these three questions 1) Does he or she **like me**? 2) Am I **any good**? 3) Will I **make** it? So that the first emotions in the class are not about whether this faculty member knows his or her stuff and is this going to be a good course, but "In what ways does this teacher understand me, and in what ways can this teacher connect this stuff to me, my issues? And my issues are self-esteem, need for validation, need for affirmation (both as individual and as member of the group) and so on."

Rhem: **What do you say to faculty who might respond "But I'm not a therapist. My specialty is English or math, not emotions"?**

Frederick: I'm not thumping just for more emotions in the classroom as therapy, but I think if the emotions are there, we need to be more aware and less afraid of that dimension in our students and in ourselves in order to be more honest and authentic in

Peter Frederick

what we're doing. The purpose for recognizing and naming tensions and emotions in the classroom is a means to an end: It's to help us become more rigorous, more comfortable with the spirit of inquiry, more aware of our cognitive processes. If the emotions are there raw, there's no room for cultivating and developing a spirit of inquiry. They block it out. I'm too busy sitting here being scared to know how to analyze that paragraph clearly.

If I come in and convey the message, as many faculty do in one way or another, "Now don't open your mouth [and say anything] until you're ready to have some evidence to back it up and a clear finished thought," there's nothing more intimidating to students. And I've experienced this with very bright students in these quality liberal arts colleges I'm teaching at. They're terrorized and they aren't going to open their mouths until somehow there's been established a climate in that classroom [that says] "Partial thoughts are all right, incomplete thoughts are all right, someone start an idea that hasn't been thought through, you're not even sure what the evidence is for it, someone else will pick it up and continue the point or think of the example."

My goal in trying to set up this kind of conversational climate is not to reward lack of evidentiary support for one's ideas, but simply to get thinking out loud. How do I know what I believe and how do I know what my examples are until I hear myself struggle to try and say it out loud. Then the examples will come. Then I develop the self-esteem and the confidence in working with groups and with my own ideas. I want that climate to be a more open one. The goal is to eventually get to the point where one can speak complete ideas with good examples in eloquent ways, but it takes time.

Rhem: **OK, granted you describe a classroom more student-centered than the "stand-and-recite" or "catch-it-as-it-pours-from-my-lips" days, but why now more than then?**

Frederick: As my children and their friends have gone from mid-teens to their 20s in these last ten years, I've come to believe that there's something deep affecting the culture that has a lot to do with dysfunctional families, addictive society, self-esteem, speed-up, and stress. I think these are profound realities in this culture that are now being reflected in our colleges. Old styles of teaching, old assumptions about pedagogy and student (*and faculty*) development have to be informed by an awareness of this rather disturbing cultural phenomenon, I think. That doesn't turn me into a therapist. I'm an historian. I teach about American culture. I teach about groups and group process, and I hope students learn their own processes and learn about the lives and voices of various groups of Americans.

But in order to help students learn those texts and intellectual constructs that I love (including America and everything good about

American history in all its ambivalence) I just think I need to be more aware of the current culture from which my students come. That's one side of it.

Another side is that as what we know about linear knowing — reasoned arguments, empirical analysis, etc. — combines with what we are learning about "connected knowing" — integration, synthesis, etc. — we are beginning to understand the importance of concepts such as "webs," "matrices," "narrative stories," and "relational connections." That in turn opens the way to being able to really understand and teach and learn in the diversity and multiculturalism in our colleges.

Rhem: **Where do the checks and balances lie in this approach? One sort of knew what the checks and balances were in logical argument and even in integration and synthesis, but where is the critical edge in what you've called this "transformational" approach?**

Frederick: You mean: if I'm so involved in process, how do I make sure they've learned the content? Higher education back to the Puritans is in the habit of thinking "either/or," but often things are "both/and." It's not process or content, it's both process and content. For me the check and balance to that concern with student life interests or process, if you will, is all the authors I teach — Black Elk, Toni Morrison, Thoreau, Emerson. The check and balance to process is CONTENT. What are your goals?

What is the purpose of your process? It's to deliver on some teaching goals, helping students learn the skills and knowledge of a particular discipline.

There are just four basic goals: to know, to think, to do, to feel:

- *to know* — you want students to know some things: facts, principles, concepts, formulas, axioms
- *to think* — critical thinking skills, to be able to do various kinds of analysis
- *to do* — some application of skills
- *to feel* — for me there's an *affective goal*, whether it's authentic feeling, appreciation of the richness of art or the wonders of the scientific method.

So I can be very explicit about my goals, and that's a check and balance to any process, any focus you take.

Rhem: **How does your approach to students relate to the work you do with faculty to enhance their teaching?**

Frederick: I don't see myself as imposing my views on teachers. I see my role as being a good listener who can ask some questions which I've learned over the years are helpful questions to lead faculty to get clear about their own goals, style, who their students are, in order to achieve their own goals in their own ways. That's the transformation I want to effect: to help us to become who we are when we are at our best.

There are as many styles of effective teacher as there are styles of learning among our students. So the question is: Which kind is better for which kind of students in which contexts? Should teaching be both lecture and discussion? Maybe. It depends on the goals. To meet the needs of a diverse group of learners — that's why I come back to the centrality of the student as learner and getting feedback on what their experience is. We have to teach differently; no one thing all the time. It should be what they need.

One principle I can assert is that any group of students inherently will have [in it] the kind of diversity that will call for a diverse array of teaching strategies. So no one model in any one class can hope to reach the needs of those students. Like I've said: It's not either/or, but both/and.

The skill we need to exercise for each other is listening. I agree with Parker Palmer that all the wisdom we need about teaching already exists on campus, and that we have to "hear students into speech." They don't have arguments and evidence behind what they say . . . YET, but they will.

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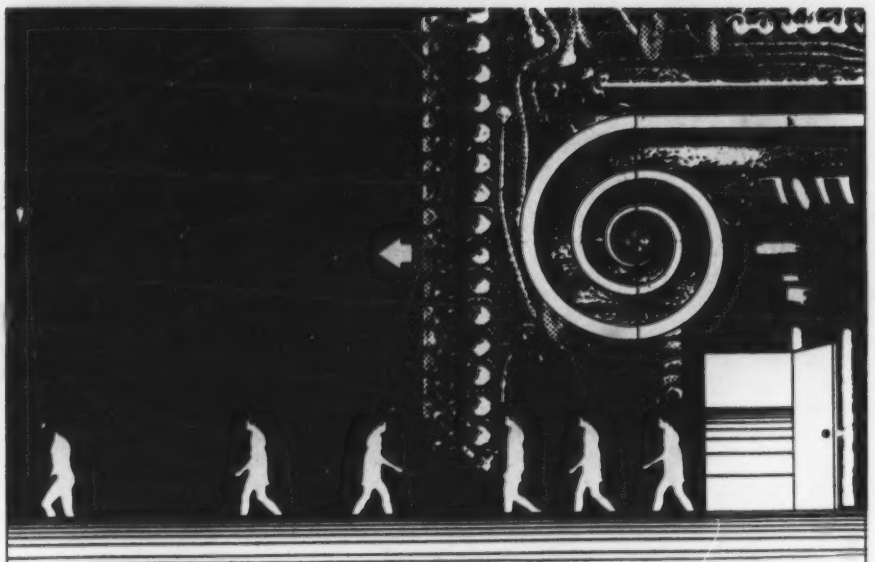

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS AND THE 'FEMINIZATION' OF ACADEME

Bonnie Wheeler
Department of English
Southern Methodist University

MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS ago, when I was a young Assistant Professor in the English and Comparative Literature Department at Columbia University, I literally ran into Muhammed Ali in the lobby of the New York Hilton. It was during an MLA meeting, and as the boxing celebrity asked me what I did and what brought this huge group together so soon after Christmas, a group of my male colleagues quickly gathered around us. I explained that we were college professors — teachers of literature — at our annual conference. The champion, quizzical and perplexed, said to me, "All right, you're a teacher. That's okay: girls are English teachers. But are you telling me that these *boys* are English teachers too? I never heard of a *boy* English teacher." The men were "stung like a bee."

Ali knew how to find a soft spot and hit it hard. The encounter haunts me and seems a lot less funny to me now than it did then. I see now that Ali's words touch a powerful fear crouched in the heart of the academy — the fear that teaching, especially teaching in the humanities, is unmanly, that it's women's work. In spite of the fact that for years most college teachers have been men, I think this fear has always been with us. Cultural shifts in the last fifty years have stirred it up. When women weren't around in great numbers, the fear could sleep. As we've entered the ranks of faculty in greater numbers, it has awakened. Still, it hides. Today, it skulks along as one of the motive forces in the debate over "political correctness." In that debate — overtly and covertly — we find ample evidence that many fear the academy is being "feminized" — emasculated.

All of us pay a terrible price for this fear. Men suffer. Women suffer. Teaching suffers and consequently students suffer. Fear diminishes intellectual life; hidden fear corrodes it. How did we get to this point? And what's going to get us out of here?

As I see it, three cultural shifts have combined to excite this fear. First, since World War II (and especially since Sputnik) the "hard" sciences have assumed the prestige and prominence once held by (or at least shared with) the humanities. Second, though we still don't graduate African-Americans, Hispan-

ics, Native Americans, and other minority populations in great numbers, the academy has during the same period made a fundamental commitment to opening itself to diverse populations without regard to race and class. And finally paralleling these sociological changes, the intellectual shape of the world has also changed. In the last fifty years in almost every area of inquiry we have moved away from what might be called the agenda of the Enlightenment. We've moved from certainty to relativism. We no longer subscribe to an idealized notion of a unitary society or unitary truth.

While these changes have come out of our own insights and principles, their combined effect has created new tensions. Consider the humanities for a moment. Indeed, the whole "political correctness" furor finds its specific gravity in the humanities. No one complains about how the teaching of physics, geology, chemistry or business has been affected. People worry about

> Most simply put, teaching is "feminized" in American culture as it is not otherwise in advanced western nations.

literature (the "canon") and history ("western civ."). Having looked again at the bedrock of our civilization, we have found the foundation made of more stones and different mortar than we realized, and we're uncertain what that means for the house or houses we've built up. Moreover, we've learned to make these inquiries in a variety of new ways that leave us more questions, more ambiguities, different ambiguities than we're used to, and we don't quite know where that leaves us.

For example the humanities require clarity about beliefs and values. Teachers must be clear; their students must be clear. At the same time, a pluralistic society requires sensitivity to all other persons' rights, beliefs, and values. This laudable commitment to tolerance creates its own tense culture. In it, one publicly represses or even at times denies one's own understanding of the truth in the name of social virtue. One doesn't want to offend other cultures with equally profound commitments to opposing truths. You see the problem: humanistic study has always been engaged in the transmission of values. Teaching in the humanities is, in many ways, equivalent now — as it has always been — to the transmission of values. Yet contemporary humanists have rejected the notion of any real unity of values. Therefore humanities teachers end up teaching tolerance, process, critical thinking, the history of ideas. These open, fluid relations to knowledge, beliefs, and values cause some to fear the academy has been "feminized."

On the political right, those like Alan Bloom and Dinesh D'Souza hope that patriarchs will return to control this messy ambiguity of values. On the left, other humanists (often male) seem ready to deny the intellectual relevance of values altogether, especially if doing so will allow them to appear as the manly men of science. For these humanists values and talk of values, even talk full of ambiguity and theory, equals propaganda — at least compared with a pure, post-modernist commitment to theory and disinterested intellectual analysis. For them, the humanities must complete its transition from traditional value transmission to its new role of value-neutral science. Both sides want to control the process of value-transmission: one through a hierarchy of meaning; the other through a hierarchy of method. Both sides — Old World certainty and scientific mimicry — want to re-establish patriarchal norms. One of the reasons many humanists in the late twentieth century crave scientific status and flaunt theory is that otherwise they run the risk of being seen as equivalent to women teachers in the lower schools, whose

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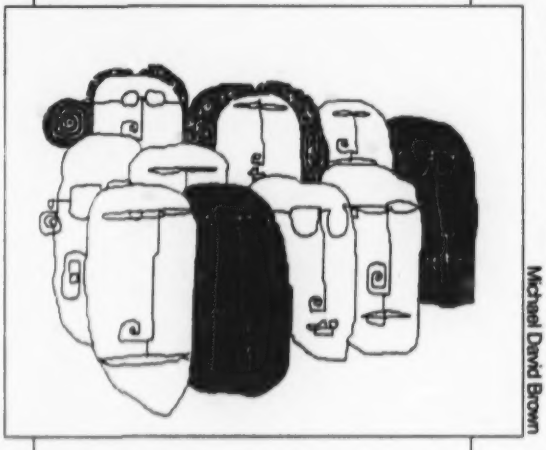
function they see as purveying values. At all costs, it seems, a feminist perspective must be avoided.

It is the influx of women and the advent of feminism that most powerfully and persuasively threaten academic norms. Thus, the phenomenon of "political correctness" is a projection masking male anger at the "feminizing" of American higher education. It is women and feminist value systems that are unacceptable. A genuinely feminist agenda threatens the hegemony of the already threatened group of humanists within academe: men are threatened not only by the sheer numbers of women entering the humanistic professions, but also by the impact of feminist conceptions of professional life.

Feminist agendas grant priority to the teaching of students, but the teaching of students has come to be seen by the academy as a time-consuming impediment to real intellectual life. European nations have never gendered their teachers into lower v. upper schools as has America. In Europe, it is still the case that students in the lower schools are as likely to have male as female teachers.

Most simply put, teaching is "feminized" in American culture as it is not otherwise in advanced western nations. Scholarship is valorized in distinction to teaching because it crafts traditionally understood masculinity. Teaching is not judged as honest labor, but rather as the embarrassing and dirty underbelly of research-driven institutions. Teaching is surely dirty work: faculty must nurture, cull, correct, persist, and listen. One must respond to the particular rather than the general. One must spend long hours in the company of young adults. Teaching engages the wholeness of an intellectual culture's expressiveness. American cultures and colleges, however, have come to treat teaching as institutional "women's work," for while teaching is practical and economically necessary, it is not seen as being as valuable as the abstract world of research. When there weren't so many women around, the different levels of respect accorded teaching and research weren't so widely separated. As long as the old order, peopled largely by men, held sway, collegiate teaching had stature, for men owned the playing field. But now women have run onto the field, and they have asserted teaching as a mainstay of a feminist (not just a "feminine") value system.

So where does this leave us? We see that the tweedy perspectives of past generations won't suffice as an identity for the humanities. We see that mystifying the humanities as a pseudo-science — which even many humanists can no longer follow, much less enjoy — has led to absurdities. We see that trying to "re-masculate" the academy isn't working and that teaching and students and the academic community in general are suffering as a result of trying. Instead perhaps we should ask what it is that a feminist perspective offers and how it might strengthen the academy. What do we see when we look beyond this often-unacknowledged focus on gender? Feminist perspectives aren't the exclusive property of women after all. They aren't even their creation entirely, having evolved from intellectual and social developments to which both men and women have contributed.



Michael David Brown

Just as a feminist agenda grants primacy to teaching, it sees the loss of a unitary world view not as a forewarning of apocalypse, but as a broken field of new opportunity waiting to be planted and cultivated. The feminist-humanist tradition embraces the opportunity to choose. It welcomes the challenge of creating values consciously, and gladly lays down the burden of transmitting them reflexively. This tradition does not fear that the value (if not the "values") of the past will be passed on. It has faith that it will — just as parents know their children will have something of both their father and their mother in them. It doesn't have the same fears about the future that patriarchs seem to have. Again, as parents know of their children, those in the feminist-humanist tradition soberly know that their students may not survive. Drugs may take them. Drunk drivers may. Depression. They may simply never wake up to their own possibilities, may never strive for much. But if they survive and we help them be the original and unique persons they already are, members of this tradition believe that whatever they create and leave behind is likely to be as valuable as anything we have tried to give them.

Ambiguity and diversity demand tolerance, patience and continuing inquiry. And these are important values to transmit both socially and intellectually. Nowhere in the academy do they live more fully than in that now "feminized" space, the classroom. I think it's time we gave up these hidden fears about the gender of teaching and looked long and hard into its soul. If we do, we will see that teachers nurture their students as well as train them. If we take up the full challenge of teaching — both its masculine and its feminine sides — the past will be protected and the future surely more secure.

Professor Wheeler is currently completing a monograph on concepts of masculinity in the medieval period.

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ETHICS

Rules, Fairness, Grades, and Graduation

Each summer the Undergraduate Teaching Improvement Council of the University of Wisconsin System holds a Summer Institute for faculty from around the state. This August one of the seminars, led by Professor Tim Lane, who teaches in the music faculty at the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire, discussed "Ethics in Teaching." As part of the seminar, small groups of faculty considered a number of problem situations (including the following) and were asked to come to a consensus about the action they would take.

Your 100-level math course is a general education requirement for all students in the Liberal Arts School, a policy you are not sure you are in agreement with. You are compiling your final grades and two contrasting students have failed your course. One of them, a music therapy major, has failed by twenty-six points. You know the following things about this student because you are a conscientious teacher and have had several discussions with this student throughout the semester:

1) the student is in his final semester at the university,

2) the student has taken the course once before and failed and, because of university policy, will lose the opportunity to retake the course if he fails again,

3) the student needs to pass your course or his major will not be completed,

4) you have taken the time to discuss the situation with the student's advisor in his major area and you have been told that the student is very competent in his field,

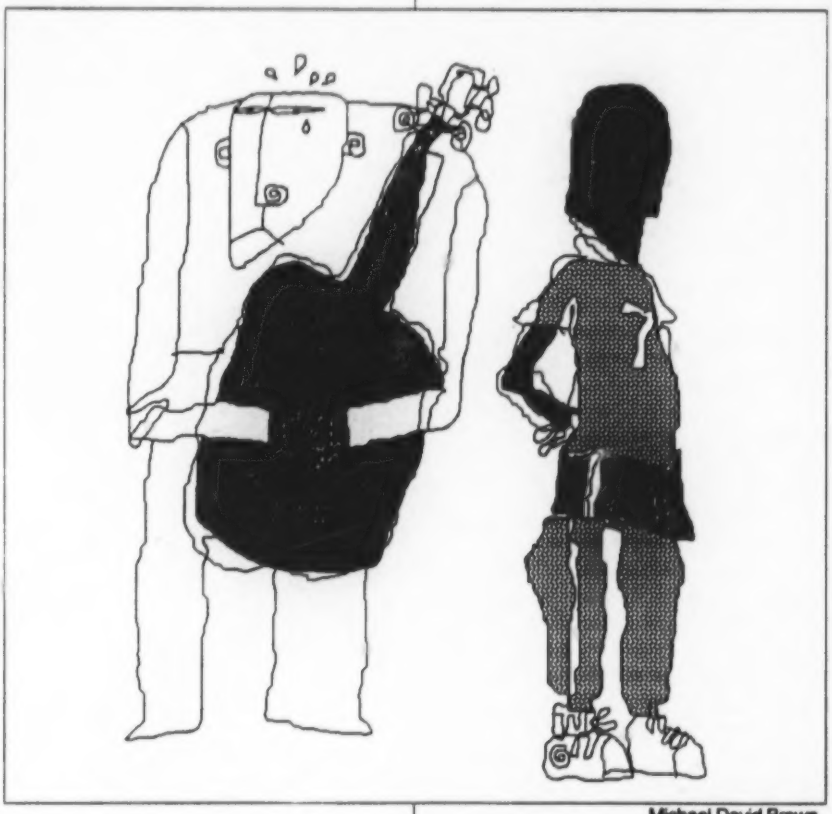
5) the earnestness of the student in seeking this amount of extra help is never in doubt, and the quality of the extra help is not in doubt, and

6) the student had a marginal chance of passing in the course up until the final exam which he failed, and you do not have the opportunity to give the exam to the student a second time (and you do not think the student could pass a second exam.)

The other student that has failed is a physical education major in his second year at the university. This is also the second time this student has taken this course but, in contrast to the music therapy major, the new student has not been conscientious, has not asked for extra help, has not responded to your positive offers and suggestions for help, and has missed almost one half of your classes. This student has failed by thirteen points.

What would you do given the fact that you must make a decision and turn your grades in later that day? Would you pass the music therapy major?

For a summary of one group's discussion (if not "the answer" to the problem) see page 12.



Michael David Brown

COMPUTERS

Around The Clock Learning

WHEN SCHOOL OPENED this fall at Eastern Michigan University, faculty found themselves invited to join a campus-wide discussion of college teaching and learning conducted entirely on a local computer network.

Using a software package called CAUCUS, the school's Faculty Center for Instructional Excellence plans to divide the general discussion into ten topic areas. These include:

Assessment
Responding to student writing and writing across the curriculum
Diversity and Multicultural issues
Instructor Course Evaluations
Using Instructional Technology
Teaching Methods
Classroom Research
Case Studies about College Teaching

Computer Conference and the use of CAUCUS

Teaching Grants

A local campus expert will monitor the discussion in each area, providing a kick-off statement, answering questions and prodding the discussion along when needed.

For the moment, only faculty and administrators will participate, but the center has hopes of expanding participation to include students eventually.

It's too early to predict how this experiment in electronic community building will work out. This may be the first formal effort to use this medium to stimulate an on-going discussion of teaching on a campus, but it's not the first to use computer networks in teaching. Some of these experiments have proven very encouraging.

Below we focus on a bold, successful effort to teach writing across the curriculum *and* involve off-campus professionals from the law enforcement community in a sociology course on criminal justice.

The Power of Discourse

Bradley Hughes, director of the University of Wisconsin - Madison's Writing Center and one of the architects of the "Comp-U-Talk" program, says enough research has already been done to establish the advantages of computer conferences in teaching. Generally, he says, they can work well in promoting collaborative, active learning. They give students practice with writing and — especially important — with the social dimensions of writing. The writing focus of a computer conference falls not on grammar, formal structure, spelling and so on, but on discourse — argument, inquiry, the pursuit and evaluation of evidence, and the clarification of relevant values. From the point of view of teaching writing, says Hughes, the aim was to establish a "small discourse community . . . based on writing and on a common interest in a subject matter."

The advantages of being able to log on to the conference at any time, coupled with the necessity of having to write one's responses in order to be heard, combine, he says, to "nudge students past their hesitancy to risk saying things in the presence of others" and encourage students to learn from their peers. Also, such conferences — when they work well (and they don't always) — "de-center the instructor . . . and engage students in intellectual inquiry rather than allowing them to be merely passive receivers of information."

Nuts and Bolts

In the eight semesters of this experiment with a course in the sociology of criminal justice, 10-20 students out of the 200 or so enrolled in the course earned an extra credit by spending an hour-and-a-half each week reading and writing on the computer program. In addition they attended the standard three hours of lecture each week. They could log on from a home computer via their modems or from a computer station on campus.

The "Comp-U-Talk" program included a variety of features. Each week the professor of the course posed questions emphasizing cognitive and discursive strategies that Hughes and his colleagues (Jack Ladinsky of the sociology department and Greg Galica of the English department) wanted students to internalize during the semester. Students were required to write essays in response to these questions. In the following week, they read and commented on the responses written by the three or four other students in their small working groups.

> "We quickly discovered that good writing in the open-ended discussion did not flourish spontaneously — especially the kind of discussion we felt would be appropriate to foster learning in this course"

The small groups also participated in a parallel discussion of course-related issues less structured than the weekly questions and answers. But more on that in a moment.

Reflecting the variety of ways such computer conferences are often used, the Wisconsin program also included: **a bulletin board function** through which the professor could post news related to the course, **a voting booth** to poll students on controversial criminal justice issues, **a private e-mail function, a chat function** for real-time exchanges between students and the professor, **an exam preparation module, a calendar** of writing and class assignments, and **a library** for the professor to archive bulletins and assignments for future use.

Getting Down to Discourse

"We quickly discovered that good writing in the open-ended discussion did not flourish spontaneously — especially the kind of discussion we felt would be appropriate to foster learning in this course," says Hughes. He and his colleagues didn't want students to just shoot from the hip with their personal opinions. They wanted them to take advantage of the time available for reflection that computer conferencing makes possible. To explain what they wanted they turned to a framework provided in research done by Martin Nystrand and Adam Gamoran, two scholars who have studied classroom discourse and the social or interactive foundation of learning.

In brief, Nystrand and Gamoran argue that the classroom discourse most associated with student learning engages students with course material through two primary means: **authentic questions** and **"uptake."**

Authentic questions have no prespecified answers, no covert code words. They signal the teacher's interest in what students think in

contrast to test questions that call for a recitation of what someone else thinks.

"Uptake" involves incorporating students' responses into an unfolding exchange. As in weaving, "uptake" blends new threads of idea and inquiry into an evolving pattern around some basic woof of subject matter.

These concepts offered a working vocabulary, a touchstone of guidance to the experiment, but in themselves they did not spell out how to achieve the kind of discourse desired.

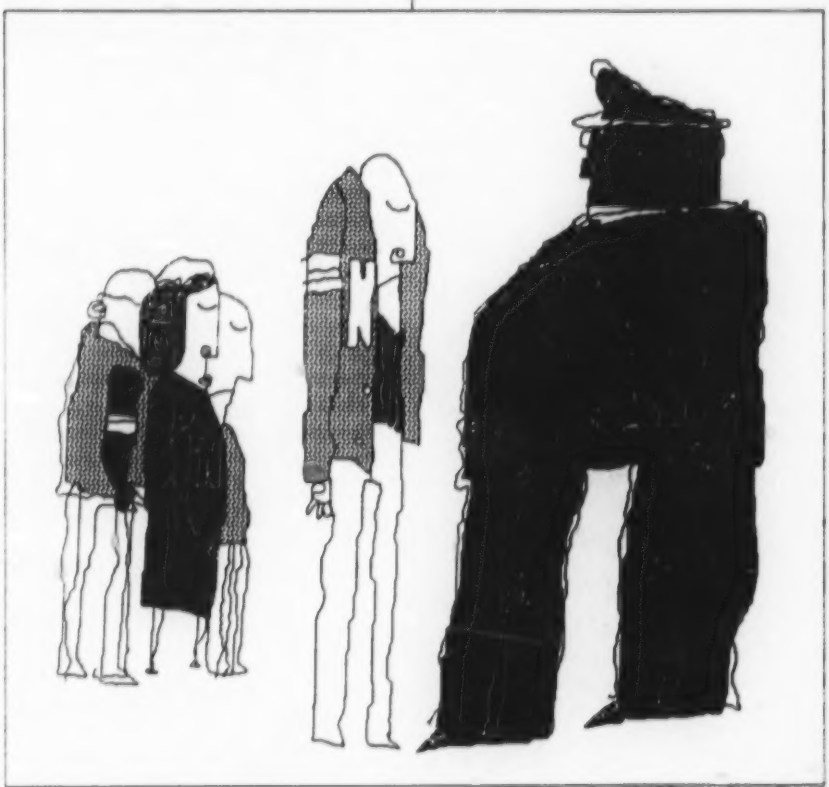
Enter The Outsiders

Ironically, inviting the chief of police, a criminal court judge, and a county district attorney into the discussion may have done as much as anything else to move the discourse toward greater substance and engagement. Hughes and his colleagues feared that students might be intimidated by these professionals, treating them as authorities, asking only polite questions. It didn't turn out that way. Access to this professional community "led students to take their writing more seriously and helped them feel more like participants in a discipline rather than merely observers," says Hughes. Excerpts from the exchanges between students and the professionals illustrate the effect of their presence on the discourse.

The course professor introduced each professional as they joined the discussion for a period of several weeks. The introductions included basic biographical data; the introduction of the district attorney ended: "Bill is married and has one very active little boy nearly two years old. Having experience in the private practice of criminal law, as an assistant DA, a public defender, and now the DA, makes him rather unique in this line of work."

Before the DA had a chance to log his first message, a student, Beth, wrote him this message:

"Mr. Foust I think it is incredibly interesting that you have worked as both assistant D.A. and D.A. and both as public defender and private defense attorney. In all job titles I am sure you have had a wide variety of duties and situations. How do D.A. and assistant D.A. differ in duties? Does being D.A. limit you to certain types of cases (homicides, for example) or more power or both? What about the differences in being a public defender vs. private criminal defense? I know that as a public defender you are just handed cases, having no choice over them, and that in some cases only represent defendants in one or two stages of their case — initial appearance and/or preliminary hearing, for example. Was this the case for you? Did you choose private practice to be able to make decisions on who you'd defend or the money or both? Finally (and I know that I've asked a lot of questions, but I am interested because what you've done so far has so much diversity), why did you keep switching from one field to the other? What was most satisfying and most discouraging in comparing defense and prosecution?"



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Each professional met with a similarly enthusiastic greeting, one full of a genuine desire to learn what they knew from personal experience. As Hughes observes: "They were avidly seeking information from these professionals in a way markedly different from their approach to text and lectures."

Days later, after responding to these and other student questions, the DA changed the course of the discussion on his own initiative. Students had been studying and writing about "prosecutorial discretion." At 7:00PM one evening the DA logged on from his home computer and threw them a curve from the left field of real life:

"A year ago a woman was battered by her live-in boyfriend. Victim called the police and upon their arrival gave a full statement. She said [he] struck her repeatedly. Defendant was arrested and charged with battery. He hired a lawyer. Some months later he apologized to Victim, promising that he would change and that it would never happen again. The D.A. was skeptical and wanted probation and counselling. Victim said the charges were putting a strain on their relationship; would the D.A. please drop charges? The D.A. thought it wasn't much of a relationship if

Defendant couldn't publicly admit what he'd done to victim. Defendant wouldn't plead.

At trial Victim said it was all an accident and Defendant never meant to hurt her. The Jury acquitted the defendant.

Less than two months later the police were called to the home of Victim and Defendant. He'd done it again. One of the officers had taken her statement last time and asked why she testified at trial as she had. She said it was the stupidest thing she'd ever done, that he'd apologized, promised to change, etc. Should she be charged with perjury?"

At 10:04PM the DA logged on again to flesh out his question:

"Apart from a number of typos, there was some substance missing from the last message. Victim clearly admitted to the officer that she had not been truthful when she testified at the trial. Did you think there was enough evidence to charge anyway?

Why charge? Just because she broke the law? Will it deter others from lying at trial? Does the fact that domestic battery victims are notorious for changing the story matter? What if counsellors had told victim at the outset of the case that she would be charged if she lied? Does the fact that a domestic battery defense attorney's best defense is often to get the couple reconciled and the story changed come into play here? Will other lawyers quit trying to get to victims if this one is charged?

Why not charge? Does the fact that no one was hurt but the victim matter? What about the integrity of the system? Or should the system just go away as soon as the victim says, "no thanks"?

Last, what do you do if you charge and convict? Jail? Fine?

Prosecutor's dilemma issues abound here. As representative of the legal system, perjury is something you should prosecute. On the other hand, as spender of the public treasury, is this where you should put your limited resources? As political animal, is charging a domestic battery victim with a felony something that's good for your future?

Hurry up and answer — I have to decide what to do."

A lively and sustained debate followed for nearly three weeks. Best of all, students seemed to take charge of the discussion. The DA entered only occasionally, usually to further complicate the issue or point out problems in proposed solutions. This was an authentic question being posed and everyone involved responded with plenty of reflective "uptake." The professor remained quiet for most of the time. It seemed clear that having students weekly respond to formal questions with structured essays was enhancing the quality of their dialogue with professionals from the "real world." They were taking writing and subject matter more seriously at all levels.

> Ironically, inviting outsiders in may have done as much as anything else to move the discourse toward greater substance and engagement.

As the discussion wound down, the professor entered to pose some thoughtful questions that looked beyond the specific case and the course itself:

"Note that regardless of the suggested treatment of this woman, no one wants to really punish her or if punishment, not harsh punishment. The public in its stereotyped image of crime wants harsh punishment. It's only when you anatomize a case, as here, that the picture becomes not so simple. Every case is not so simple. Sure there are really bad offenders out there. But when you look at the details of the case, it is still not so simple. Those inside the system experience a different reality from those on the outside. The public can't possible comprehend (and probably doesn't want to comprehend) the dilemmas faced every day by the actors in our adversary system. The public is much too remote from what goes on there. How shall we begin to repair that?"

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Resources:

Nystrand, Martin and Gamoran, Adam. "Student engagement: when recitation becomes conversation" in H. Waxman and H. Walberg (eds.) *Effective Teaching: Current Research* (McCutchan Publishing: Berkeley, 1991).

Other Models; Other Stories

NOT EVERY EXPERIMENT IN computer conferencing works out smoothly. Most, however, have yielded encouraging results. For a comprehensive report on a multi-year experiment with three different models of computer conferencing at Indiana University, see "Computer Conferencing for Collaborative Learning in Large College Classes" by Edmund Hansen, *et al* (ERIC Document Number: HE 024 782).

This 40-page report summarizes results of an experiment in which computer networks were used to

- explore ongoing discussion topics
- work on case studies, and
- prepare for tests collaboratively.

Many of the students in this study did not like the "electronic classroom." Finding a terminal to log on proved irksome for some, and when not required, a high percentage of students did not participate. Where the computer network functioned as an extra option to an otherwise conventional class, students were not well-motivated to spend time exploring its possibilities. However, the more central the function of the technology, the more widely accepted it became.

Despite rather mixed results, the study revealed encouraging possibilities in the way students responded to using the networks to discuss case studies and in test preparation.

The wealth of data makes the paper valuable to anyone considering experimenting with computer conferencing as part of their teaching.

Active Learning

Compiled by Judi Conrad, Associate Director, ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education

A Word About "ERIC Tracks": Its Purpose and Potential

The ERIC Tracks column was conceived as a means of letting our readers know:

- what is in the ERIC database
- what recent material we find of greatest interest
- what that material suggests in terms of trends & issues
- how best to "track" those emerging trends and issues
- what areas contain gaps and suggest opportunities for contributions to the ERIC database, *The National Teaching and Learning Forum*, and, ultimately, when the body of knowledge and research matures, the ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Reports series (syntheses of research and/or practice on given topics).

If there is a topic you would like ERIC to track, we would be happy to consider it for a future ERIC Tracks column. Simply send your suggestion to **jconrad@inet.gov.ed** on the Internet or by mail to the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education, One Dupont Circle, Suite 630, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Defining Active Learning

The ERIC system is designed to index emerging concepts through the use of identifiers (uncontrolled index terms) found in the identifier field (ID) of the ERIC resume. Once an identifier has been used a number of times and there is some consensus in the field regarding the definition of the concept, that identifier becomes a candidate for the ERIC Thesaurus of Descriptors (controlled index terms). Because "active learning" is an "emergent index term," it is not currently listed in the ERIC Thesaurus. However, "active learning" is an ERIC identifier because it has been used to "identify" 43 documents or journal articles currently in the ERIC database. Based on the search we did for this column, ERIC/HE will soon submit "active learning" as a candidate for the ERIC Thesaurus. What this means in ERIC terms is that both the concept and the precise terminology have become significant enough to graduate into the ERIC Thesaurus as a full-fledged descriptor. In a word, Active Learning has arrived.

Coming up with a definition remains a challenge, however. There are those who contend that the term is redundant. Doesn't "learning" presuppose some kind of intellectual activity?

The need for a term like "active learning" stems from the educational tradition that endorses information dissemination (as in "the course will cover . . .") at the expense of intellectual and emotional engagement — a tradition that sees learning as a noun rather than a verb.

"If as a noun, as a thing to be possessed and passed along, then you present your truths, neatly packaged . . . but if you see 'learning' as a verb, the [teaching/learning] process is different." (Schorske, cited in McCleery 1986, p. 106 and again in Bonwell and Eison, 1991)

The fact that the term "experiential learning" has been around for a long time now and is sometimes used interchangably with "active learning" (see Hendrikson, 1984, ED 253-468 and Ducote, 1990, EJ 426-133) suggests that making the distinction between active and passive learning is important. Having written the ERIC definition for experiential learning back in 1978 when it became an authorized ERIC descriptor and faced now with the task of defining active learning for the Thesaurus, I need to know what distinguishes experiential learning from active learning. Thinking hierarchically, as we are wont to do in ERIC, I see the definitions proffered by Bonwell and Eison, 1991 (ED 336-049) and by Meyers and Jones, 1993 (ED Forthcoming) as more encompassing and therefore, broader than experiential learning.

Acknowledging that it is difficult to define active learning, Bonwell and Eison ultimately conclude that active learning is simply "involv[ing] students in doing things and thinking about the things they are doing." The operative concept here seems to be conscious involvement.

What Do Active Learning Strategies Encompass?

Active learning strategies are as varied and extensive as the imagination allows. *Active Learning: Creating Excitement in the Classroom* by Charles C. Bonwell and James A. Eison (1991) provides an excellent survey. This monograph synthesizes active learning strategies and the research that supports them. The fact that this publication currently is the all-time best seller in the ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Reports series suggests that faculty all over the country are interested in adopting and adapting active learning strategies for their college classes. While this popularity says quite a lot about interest in the topic, it also may indicate something about the level of interest in the instructional reform

movement in general. Interestingly, this monograph also has had more bulk orders than any other in the series, suggesting that it is being used as a sourcebook in faculty development programs.

Sensitive to the concerns of academic traditionalists, Bonwell and Eison carefully present a case for incorporating active learning strategies across the curriculum, illustrating time and again how careful planning can minimize the risk of failure and practice can liberate both instructor and student. The authors begin with a discussion of **the modified lecture**. This is an important place to begin, because the lecture is the higher education norm, the traditional teaching strategy that has obtained throughout the history of higher education.

The Modified Lecture

Modification of a comfortable norm is not nearly as wrenching as abandoning it totally. Specific suggestions for modifying the lecture include: pausing for enhanced retention and comprehension (e.g., asking students to work in pairs for anywhere from 10 to 20 minutes to examine, recapitulate, and otherwise analyze either what they have just heard or how they might apply what they have heard to a particular problem or issue); using tests and quizzes to help students solidify what they have learned from a lecture and what they think about the subject or issue at hand (frequent quizzes also help instructors assess their own performance); demonstrations accompanied by participative questions (e.g., "What will happen if we do this?"); alternative lecture formats (e.g., the "feedback lecture" which consists of two mini-lectures approximately 20 minutes long separated by a small-group problem-solving study session or the "guided lecture" where students are asked to listen to 25-30 minutes of lecture, then spend five minutes writing what they can recall, followed by small group discussions in which basic concepts and supporting data are pooled to construct meaningful notes and the instructor is available for clarification); and, finally, the "responsive lecture" which allocates one class period per week to open-ended student-generated questions on any aspect of the course.

Discussion

The authors present a chapter on questioning and discussion, addressing: the supportive classroom environment (e.g., they suggest that learning students names is probably paramount to an improved classroom environment); conscious knowledge of the types of questions that may be used and the levels of knowledge they will elicit (e.g., cognitive memory questions, convergent thinking questions, divergent thinking questions, and evaluative questions); effective questioning techniques (major emphasis here is on planning, sequencing, and directing discussion questions); discussion strategies and style (emphasis is on adopting a genuinely committed attitude/disposition that conveys commitment to genuine inquiry (the rhetorical question, for example, denies engagement on the part of either learner or instructor).

A later chapter presents a variety of active learning strategies that have proved successful in the college classroom. The list is thought provoking in and of itself: **visual based instruction** (only effective when used in conjunction with other strategies, rather than as a substitute for the lecture); **writing in class** (keeping a journal, summarizing a lecture, jotting down the two most important concepts discussed); **problem solving** (e.g., case studies and guided design wherein students define and diagnose a problem and then identify and evaluate alternative solutions); **computer based instruction** (affords interactive and mastery learning opportunities); **cooperative learning** (emphasis on the synergism of effective group decision making, conflict resolution, and communication skills); **debate** (presentation of supporting data, refutation, counterexample/data, and summation); **drama** (written scripts that address specific concepts or problems); **role playing, simulations and games** (used to help students experience diverse and unfamiliar situations); **peer teaching** (e.g., partnerships wherein students alternate the student and teacher roles or working groups that work collectively to enhance the skills of each group member).

Virtually All Disciplines Are Using Active Learning Strategies

The 43 citations found in the ERIC database carrying the identifier "active learning" reflected a broad spectrum of disciplines, including math, library science, sociology, teacher education, history, reading, writing and composition, social studies, public relations, psychology, drug education, and nursing education. Evidently active learning strategies can be applied in virtually any discipline.

Two different articles on teacher education assert that students prefer and learn best from participatory experiences as field work (EJ 446707 and EJ 446508). An article from *History Teacher* (EJ 446506) describes three strategies for an undergraduate history course: debating differing historical interpretations, demonstrating change and continuity in terms of past and present, and simulating real and imaginary events. An article from the *Social Studies Review* (EJ 445185) reports that students in an introductory history course who kept journals and wrote informally about their reading assignments grew into active learners who found history more engaging.

Teaching The Whole Brain?

Among the especially provocative documents we found is a piece by Wesley K Davis (ED 345 240), which relates brain research and language function to teaching creative and critical thinking through writing. Davis suggests that active learning strategies support the notion of "teaching to the whole brain" and that a process-centered approach to composing and communicating helps students actively employ the functions of the whole brain.

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"Recent Works on Using Active Learning Strategies Across the Disciplines." Bonwell, Charles C., Center for Pharmacy Education. Saint Louis College of Pharmacy. January 1993. (forthcoming; cf. text)

"Students Assess Writing to Learn in Large History Classes." Steffens, Henry. *Social Studies Review*, v31 n1 p55-58. 1991. EJ445185.

"Tearing Down the Wall: Adventures in Active Learning." McAndrews, Lawrence J. *History Teacher*, v25 n1 p35-43. 1991. EJ446506.

"Training Historians to Teach." Shapiro, Susan. *History Teacher*, v25 n1 p55-61. 1991. EJ446508.

Bonwell and Eison also identify six barriers to change in the college classroom and suggest ways these can be addressed by faculty, faculty developers, campus administrators, and researchers.

Promoting Active Learning

Promoting Active Learning: Strategies for the College Classroom, by Chet Meyers and Thomas B. Jones (Josey-Bass, 1993), is another major contribution to the growing body of literature on active learning. The authors maintain that "learning is by its very nature an active process and different people learn in different ways." They identify talking and listening, reading, writing, and reflecting as the key elements of active learning and consider each element in the context of educational research and informed observation. Divided into three major sections, this book serves as a guide to understanding the concept, the strategies and techniques that have proven successful (informal small groups, cooperative student projects, simulations, and case studies) and resources that encourage active learning (integrated reading materials and guest speakers, effectively used technology, and instructional expertise actively assessed and developed). Of particular value are the numerous teaching tips and tools included (e.g., syllabus checklist, questionnaires, etc.).

Making Active Learning An Institutional Priority?

Among the most interesting finds in our search of the database was "Active Learning and the LRC," published in Jossey-Bass's New Directions for Community Colleges (N 71, Fall 1990, EJ 426-133). This article by Richard L. Ducote describes how Collin County Community College (McKinney, Texas) was established in 1985 as a "learner-centered institution dedicated to the proposition that students would be actively involved in their own learning."

Philosophically committed to integrating active learning into the curriculum, this college established a laboratory component in the courses of all disciplines. Laboratory assignments are performed outside of the classroom, frequently in the Learning Resource Center. Labs generally incorporate: learner-centered and student-directed learning; emphasis on problem solving, discovery and inquiry; practical application of course content; focus on holistic understanding rather than fact acquisition; perception-based rather than theory-based learning and emphasis on heuristic processes (learning about learning).

For each three-hour course, students complete an average of one hour of lab work in addition to three hours of classroom work. Students are made to understand that the lab work is an essential integral part of their course of study, and faculty, while encouraged to include experiential learning labs in all courses, are afforded complete freedom in developing their lab components. Focusing on "how rather than what," the LRC staff play a major role in helping students learn how to discover, evaluate, judge, and problem solve.

Located within the LRC is an Alternative Learning Center (ALC) designed to accommodate diverse learning and teaching styles and to enhance experiential learning and hands-on practice through the use of educational technology. In addition to a vast array of computer technologies, the ALC includes a telecommunications technology and provides telecourses that may be viewed at home or in the ALC. A series of cross-disciplinary experiential events (e.g., films, panel discussions, field trips, debates, performances, etc.) is also coordinated under the auspices of the LRC/ALC.

• • •

Charles Bonwell has compiled a 14 page bibliography ("Recent Works on Using Active Learning Strategies Across the Disciplines," January 1993, ED Forthcoming) that includes resources for business, the humanities, the sciences, and the social sciences. Within each of these four disciplinary categories, he has categorized citations by the active learning strategy employed. Subscribers interested in receiving a copy of this bibliography may contact the clearinghouse. We will make photocopies for you until the bibliography becomes available through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service.

"Teachism": Naming The Fear

THE MOST PERNICIOUS obstacle to improving college teaching lies in a pervasive anti-teaching prejudice, says Diane Halpern, professor of psychology at the California State University in San Bernardino. In March, speaking at the Lilly Conference on College Teaching at Lake Arrowhead, California, Halpern gave it a name: "teachism."

What does teachism look like? How do you recognize it? What is the evidence that it exists?

Within the university teachism pops up in accepted diction. Such phrases as "teaching load" and its happy pair "release time" reflect the attitude that teaching is "a massive burden" keeping faculty from the important work of research, Halpern says. "I have never heard of anyone getting release time from research so that she can work on improving her teaching."

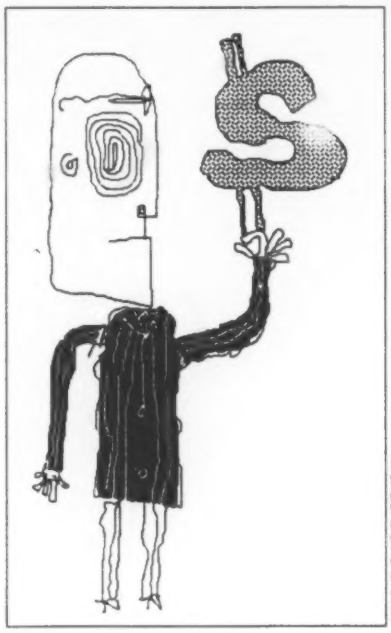
But teachism exists outside the university as well. When faculty hear comments like "It must be great having your summers off" and "Twelve hours a week in the classroom sounds like a part-time job to me," they're encountering public teachism.

Like any prejudice, says Halpern, teachism has economic consequences. A 1993 study by the National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning & Assessment found an inverse relationship between the time tenure-track faculty spend on teaching and their salary. In short, "the more time professors spend in instruction-related activities, the less money they earn."

Inspired by an article by Yale psychologist Robert Sternberg on practical intelligence (cf. *The National Teaching and Learning Forum*, Vol. 2, No. 2), Halpern conducted a mini-survey of her colleagues designed to find activities that were considered both good for teaching and good for one's income. There were few.

"In fact, if you look over the activities that are good for teaching and university life, few of them will even count as legitimate activities in a promotion or tenure decision," said Halpern. "The message is clear: do a 'good enough' job of teaching, but don't let it keep you from those activities that are valued in higher education."

"Every day, each of us faces a mini crisis because we are always forced to choose between activities that enhance the teaching and learning process and activities that are financially rewarded and can be counted in tenure and promotion. Suppose that you are a young untenured assistant professor making $33,000 a year with a family to support. This not-so-hypothetical professor had better put her or his efforts into those activities that will count in the tenure process and increase income. This means that he or she will have to minimize student contact, especially for activities like advising and resolving problems which are extremely time consuming."



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Asking how things got this way, says Halpern, is like asking who created prejudice — or prestige — in the first place. "It is no secret that a professor's prestige is inversely related to how much she teaches. Prestige is also stratified within teaching loads. Graduate courses are more prestigious than undergraduate ones and, if you do teach undergraduates, upper division courses are more prestigious than lower division courses. Other activities like advising which are critically important to students are valued even less than what happens in the classroom.

"I call these elitist attitudes 'teachism,' and I believe that the effects are as pernicious as the other 'isms' — racism, sexism, antisemitism, and ageism, to name a few."

If improving teaching depends on changing these attitudes, how do you go about that? "It is clear to me, and I'm not even a behaviorist, that if we are serious about improving undergraduate education, then we must enhance the rewards."

Halpern went on to offer nine suggestions aimed at reducing teachism.

1. *Reward good teaching with something more tangible than words.* This suggestion makes people nervous, Halpern says, because they fear that good teaching can't be fairly evaluated. Halpern disagrees: "It is no more difficult to measure teaching than it is to measure many other constructs in psychology — constructs like personality, locus of control, depression, and anxiety."

2. *Create endowed professorships for excellence in teaching.* Halpern sees the time as ripe for seeking outside funding in support of teaching. "We need to accord the same status to outstanding teachers as we do to outstanding researchers and administrators," she says.

3. *Highlight and publicize teaching excellence.* "Put it on your brochures, talk to prospective students about it, and use it to recruit new faculty," she says.

4. *Set up teaching centers on every campus so that faculty who care about their teaching can learn to be even better.* Few faculty were ever taught to teach, she says, but it's not too late to learn. "Improving what happens in your classroom should be a career-long activity."

5. *Make publishing in teaching journals and writing texts a recognized and regularized component of the retention and tenure process.* Contributions to the culture of teaching must

figure positively in tenure decisions. "We need to send the message that faculty should be contributing to the body of knowledge about teaching in their substantive area — something that's at least as important as original research in the discipline."

6. *Provide release time for teaching.* If your campus gives release time for research, says Halpern, make sure it also gives release time for such things as planning new courses, setting up new labs and other teaching-related activities.

7. *Provide nonevaluative peer reviews of teaching.* Halpern lends her support to the growing number of voices calling for a wider use of constructive peer evaluation as part of an on-going involvement with teaching.

8. *Institute a teaching requirement for all graduate students.* Just because current faculty weren't given a chance to study teaching along with content material doesn't mean future faculty need to be deprived.

9. *Make research an integral part of your teaching.* Halpern believes all students should be involved in some aspect of the research experience. "I believe that the skills that are involved in the formulation and execution of a research project are a necessary component of every undergraduate's college experience. It's not an either/or choice with regard to teaching and research. We can value them both and find ways in which they reinforce each other."

"We can end prejudice against teaching at the college level," says Halpern, "but as with every other type of prejudice, we must first acknowledge that it exists. We can change the rules of the game to make teaching a more valued component of the professor's role, and we can do this without denigrating the importance of research. If we get together everyone who cares about teaching and learning in the university classroom, and each individual takes one step in the direction of improving educational quality, then we will have a tremendous movement even if we're not sure where we're going." ■

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ANSWERS?

■N A HEATED DISCUSSION (TO which the FORUM editor made bold to add several rhetorical BTUs), the small group assigned this question reached a consensus around the idea of giving both failing students incompletes. The impetus for the action lay in the plight of the music therapy student, but a sense of fairness dictated offering an equal opportunity to the physical education major who was also about to fail the course for a second time. The group felt its decision might be viewed as an evasion of decisive action. It decided the action as a superior course to simply failing the students or unilaterally deciding to give them "gentlemen's D's." The group favored the possibility of involving a wider spectrum of the college community — the appropriate dean, advisor, et al. — rather than forcing an individual faculty member to make a decision whose implications and consequences ranged far beyond the scope of the individual course grade.

Resources: Definitions and concepts from the following works helped guide, stimulate, and define the discussions of ethical problems.

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- Strike, Kenneth A. and Soltis, Jonas F. *The Ethics of Teaching.* Teacher's College Press, Columbia University, New York and London, 1985.

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